



MAULANA  
ABUL KALAM AZAD



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ABUL KALAM AZAD

BY  
A. B. RAJPUT, M.A.



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## INTRODUCTION

Caesar was a man of the moment and Paul a man of the future, for Caesar was the symbol of his age and Paul was the embodiment of those prophetic qualities which create a future age. But Abul Kalam Azad haply combines in him the qualities of both Caesar and Paul, for his actions and achievements, though symbolical of the present age, require yet another age to be fully understood and recognized. Gifted with a clear and luminous brain, a prodigious memory, an uncommon sobriety and aplomb, an amazing versatility of talent, and a proverbial sense of wit and humour, he entered politics at the dawn of the present century. These natural gifts combined with his knack of quickly grasping the core of a subject, his great scholastic aptitude and his commanding oratory, soon installed him high in the hearts of the teeming millions of the country.

Being the President of the Indian National Congress throughout the most critical period of the country during the World War II, Abul Kalam Azad has been responsible for leading the country's fight for freedom through the thick of the war-cries, hunger, famine and

pestilence. Undaunted and unflinching, Azad mastered the most trying circumstances and the most damping atmospheres in the country, and today we find him, strong as ever, on the high-road of action towards the temple of fame, glory and immortality.

His life has been a unique example of the stability of human character and the firmness of belief so rarely met with amongst the people of the day, and for the study of that, therefore, I put the book in your hands with all good wishes.

DELHI :  
*February, 1946.*

A. B. RAJPUT.

## CHAPTER I

### The Man Who Defied the Great Mughal

"We believe," proclaimed the Great Mughal from the throne of gold in a clear and dignified tone, "in the necessity of the Hindu-Muslim unity in our Empire. There has been a quarrel between the two people in Mathura, and some Hindus have razed a mosque to the ground. We wish that they should be forgiven as an act of brotherhood."

The day was lustrous and bright, and under a soft blue sky the *Diwan-i-Khas* was gold-plated with sun-shine. The best flower-garden in the country blazed on all sides of that magnificent palace.

The sun made shadows from the pillars of the great hall and a silky golden warmth slanted through its noble arches. Thick, woolly and bright carpets from Persia, Cathay and Turkey spread over the expanse of its floor, and a huge throne of gold shone brightly in the centre whereon sat the Great Mughal—Akbar with an invisible spotlight focussed on him.



The hall was packed with noblesse and illuminati dressed in rich robes of gold and silk of scarlet, blue and purple. Some stood in a sky-high mood, while there were others who looked about the foot of the throne with brooding and piercing eyes. Here were gay eyes filled with an intense glee of living, there an extinguished-looking face autographed with worry.

As he spoke, the great Mughal looked off into space for a moment and with a flash of smile beamed at his nobles like a man waiting to play his ace.

Mulla Mubarak, the father of his dearly loved Prime Minister Abul Fazl and an erudite scholar of his time, got up from his seat and spoke: "Sire, this humble slave wishes a thousand years' life for Your Majesty. Herein lies indeed the spirit of toleration."

Akbar imbibed the spirit of toleration at the hands of Mubarak. Akbar was a child in matters of Church and Mubarak was the man behind the great act of religious toleration and unity of different sects and creeds in India of the 16th century. Mubarak led Akbar to establish the *Ibadat Khana* or the House of Worship wherein he invited religious heads and divines of diverse beliefs to participate in religious and philosophical discussions.

In this House of Worship they proposed to

make the Great Mughal the spiritual head of the nation, and from this House emanated the *Mahzar*. And it was again Mubarak who conceived of and sponsored this famous document.

## II

The *Mahzar* assigned the Great Mughal an infallible authority in all matters relating to religion.

It was a document speaking of an acute intellect and profound knowledge of human nature. Therein lay an attempt to accomplish the impossible task of 'providing all sects in his empire with one universal eclectic religion to which he gave the name of Divine Monotheism. His Majesty was mightily pleased at the offer, and invited the divines at the court to sign the document in their approval. It was signed by most of them, and thereafter sent to Agra and Delhi for compliance.

A certain *darvesh* by name of Shaikh Jamaluddin (peace be upon him) known to the common folk as Shaikh Behlul lived in Delhi. He was one of the greatest saints and scholars of his day, having profound mastery over the traditional sayings of the Prophet.

This cordial and friendly old gentleman was held in highest esteem by the people all

over the country. He cared little for the worldly allurements. He had a vast number of disciples counting among them people like Peer Mohammad Khan known as the *Khan-i-Khanan*, and *Khan-i-Azam* Mirza Aziz Kokaltash Khan, the foster brother of Akbar. Yet he lived the life of a humble teacher of Islamic divinity.

The document was presented to him by an envoy of the Great Mughal with instructions to sign it approving His Majesty to be the Spiritual Head and *Imam* of the age.

His bright eyes peered with ferret sharpness through the paper. Akbar could not claim to be the *Imam* of his age. He was going astray from the path of Islamic Code of Religion. He saw a distant storm through the fog ; he refused to sign the document.

Shaikh Jamaluddin, a poor *darvesh*, defied the Great Mughal seated on the throne of gold, waiting to play his ace.

### III

Shaikh Jamaluddin is one of the earliest known ancestors of the subject of our present volume. He defied the Great Mughal, and to avoid any further clash he left the country with a party of his disciples and students for the holy of holies, Mecca.

He set an example of *Satyagraha* or protest against the Government of his time, and Abul Kalam has a legitimate pride to inherit that trait, so richly, from his noble ancestor.

This happened in the year 1579. While the Great Mughal chafed over the flat refusal of the pauper, the *darvesh* hurried away to heave a sigh of relief from the air which was heavy with the breath drifting from the mouth of hell.

The Meccans received him with due respect and honour. The Shaikh spent twelve years of respite in the calm and quiet atmosphere of that holy city, and then one day two of his old disciples suddenly arrived at his house from India. They were the old *Khan-i-Azam* and the *Khan-i-Khanan*. They had waited long enough for the Shaikh to return to India, but in vain. They requested and pleaded him to come back to his motherland; but he was reluctant to accede to their pleas.

In the end, his ardent disciples did succeed in bringing him back to India, but the old man died soon after his arrival at Delhi.

#### IV

Akbar's son Jahangir (the World Conqueror) inherited a vast empire with little to worry

his head about. Naturally his attention was diverted towards the *darbar*, the harem and the fine arts. The courtiers began to glorify the Emperor by deifying him. He was worshipped like the sun early in the mornings. His face had a halo of divine light around it. His form was the *Zill-i-Ilahi* (the shadow of the Almighty).

The courtiers proposed to prostrate before their sire in the *darbar* and in private. The divines agreed to follow the practice.

Shaikh Mohammad Afzal (peace be upon him) was a saintly gentleman of truthful nature and high ideal. He bravely refused to do the ignoble act of indulging into baalism by prostrating before a mortal. 'Prostration of this kind', said he, 'is due only to God Almighty, and cannot be made before any earthly king.'

The Shaikh could not quit the country as a protest against the Emperor. He was arrested and imprisoned in the Gwalior Fort, where he manfully faced the troubles of the dungeon for four long years.

This Shaikh Mohammad Afzal was another of the noble ancestors of Abul Kalam Azad.

Abul Kalam Azad says in his famous biography, *Tazkira*: 'Three great families combine my ancestry whose members were famed in India and Arabia for their scholar-

ship and learning; but none of them ever cared or wished for the worldly wealth.'

He says further : ' I do not want, even for a moment, to trumpet my rich ancestry for winning any respect or applause from the people. Nay, never ! For a man the best test of honour is his personal merits and attainments and not the moth-eaten tables of ancestry. Therefore, by the grace of God, I do neither believe in such cheap popularity nor ever desire for it. But, undoubtedly, it is a great kindness of God Almighty that I was born in such a house from where the currents of learning and divinity have flowed since centuries past.'

This scholar-statesman may well be proud of the learning and divinity of his noble ancestors. His one and the only desire is to endeavour hard to follow the path of truth in the wake of his brave forefathers.

## CHAPTER II

### **From Hell-Fire to Heavens**

There in the city of Delhi lived a certain Shaikh Mohammad Khairuddin, a man with a fine beard, tall, kindly and benignant.

This gentleman of friendly disposition and noble bearing was a reputed scholar of his day in Islamic theology, and a mystic of the first order. As a scholar his fame had spread throughout the Islamic world for his numerous works in Arabic and Persian languages, and as a mystic, he was respected for his exalted position by thousands of people throughout the expanse of India from Calcutta to Delhi, and from Lahore to Bombay.

With an army of disciples and a mountain of books, this silver-haired man lived his pious and learned life. He pursued the profession of his noble ancestor Shaikh Jamaluddin while 'the slow honey of happiness poured through him.'

Summer set in as usual, and a devilish hew of intolerable heat, with a temperature up to 120 degrees and violent sand storms, engulf-

ed the old town of the Great Mughal. While people worked a few hours at dawn and dusk, for the rest of the day they lay panting with fans in hands. It became a hellhole—that city of the Great Mughal.

The year was 1857 and the month of May had gone by a third when the city was swept away by a storm so memorable in the pages of Indian history.

## II

As an orange gleam of sunlight flamed among the shadows of the cantonment barracks at Ambala, a telegraphic message flashed from Delhi. It was :

*Hon'ble East India Company's  
Electrical Telegraph.*

“ Delhi 11th May.

“ Cantonment in a state of seige. Mutineers from Meerut. 3rd Light Cavalry number not known said to be one hundred and fifty men cut off communication with Meerut . . . City in a state of considerable excitement. Troops sent down but nothing certain yet.”

The storm was rising in Delhi, and the machinery of the East India Company was coming in full swing to stem the tide of the flood:



“ Delhi, 4 p.m. 11th September. Sixteen heavy guns and Howitzers and ten large mortars opened this morning on the Cashmeer and Water Bastions and adjoining curtains, and have maintained an effective fire all day.”

No one was safe within the town of Delhi, not even the unconcerned and pious mystics. On September 23, 1857, it was reported :

“ The news from Delhi is that the King was taken prisoner yesterday. . . Captain Hodson had just returned from Humayun's Tomb and reports having killed King's two sons, Mirza Mogul and Mirza Kiza (*Khair*) Sultan, and his grandson Mirza Aboobukur . . . ”<sup>1</sup>

And then came the deluge. “ All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered,” records Montgomery Martin, “ were bayoneted on the spot; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty and fifty persons were hiding. These were not mutineers, but residents of the city, who trusted to our well-known mild rule for pardon, I am glad to say they were disappointed.” “ . . . Harmless citizens were shot clasping their hands for mercy. Trembling old men were cut down. . . The people of Delhi had expiated, many times over, the crimes of the mutineers. Tens of thousands

1. *Lahore Chronicle Extra*, September 23, 1857.

of men and women and children were wandering for no crime, homeless over the country. What they had left behind was lost to them for ever; for the soldiers, going from house to house and from street to street, ferreted out every article of value, and smashed to pieces whatever they could not carry away" (Holmes). Mr. C. F. Andrews has recorded in his biographical sketch of Zakauallah, how that pious man's family suffered without any fault whatsoever, and Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who helped the British during those days more than any other single man, found that when he went to Delhi, his uncle had been murdered, and his mother had to seek refuge in a servant's house.<sup>1</sup>

For days everything felt hollow and empty, and Shaikh Mohammad Khairuddin was not in any way safe with all his army of disciples.

### III

Like a wild bird tracking through the air, the Shaikh's thoughts wandered on for an asylum. He decided for Rampur where the ruler, Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan, was one of his staunchest friends and fervent followers. As the Nawab had helped the East India Company to quell the Mutiny, the Shaikh could heave a

1. *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad*, by Mahadev Desai (London). p. 23.

sigh of relief under his quiet roof. He, therefore, left the town of Delhi with a group of unselfish citizens, and with a lot of freight on his train of thoughts.

In the dusk of a September night, while wind huddled the trees on the road to Rampur, they slowly dragged their feet, stumbling and half-blinded with dust and darkness, towards that abode of safety.

When the stars began to pale down and dawn seemed well nigh, they were in the territory of the kindly Nawab after passing through an ordeal of a week's perilous journey.

The Nawab showed all kindness to the Shaikh, but could not persuade him to stay for long in Rampur. He went thence to Bombay with all the necessary assistance and facilities provided by the Nawab, and therefrom sailed to Mecca—right in the wake of his noble ancestor Shaikh Jamaluddin.

#### IV

The waves swimming in on a gentle west wind carried a boat towards the shores of Arabia. The Shaikh landed at Jeddah. On the following day he was amongst the scholars and *sufis* of Mecca, at home and content.

The Shaikh's writings had already been

acclaimed by the theologians of Arabia, Egypt, Iraq and Turkey. Even Abdul Majid Khan, the Sultan of Turkey had a very great yearning to meet him in person, and it was on his invitation that the Shaikh went to Constantinople and remained with the Sultan for a few years. The Sultan published a number of his Arabic works from Cairo, and this added a lot to the Shaikh's popularity.

In 1872 he returned to Mecca to undertake a philanthropic work. The famous water-course constructed by the Queen of the Caliph Haroon-Rashid, known as the *Nahr-i-Zubeida* needed immediate repairs. He collected no less than eleven lakhs of rupees from his disciples, devotees and friends and completed this huge task under his personal supervision.

He was now settled in Mecca, where the highest and the noblest eagerly sought his acquaintance. The Mufti of Madina, Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zahir Watri, who was a peerless scholar of his day, and perhaps the last known traditionalist of repute in Arabia, offered his niece in marriage to Shaikh Khairuddin. This gentle lady herself well-versed in Arabic literature and Islamic sciences, ultimately became the mother of Abul Kalam Azad, who thus inherited a noble legacy of learning both from the side of his father as well as that of his mother.

In 1880 a large number of his Indian

disciples requested the Shaikh to return to India for their spiritual guidance. He yielded to their calls, and returned to India, but had to go back soon to Mecca. Although he made several voyages to India thereafter at the behests of his followers, he could not settle in India finally until 1907. At this time a rich Bengali trader, Haji Abdul Wahid by name, brought him to Calcutta, which thereafter, became the centre of attraction for thousands of his followers all over India.

The Shaikh breathed his last in this city in the year 1909.

## CHAPTER III

### **Three ancient civilizations contribute to make up a prodigy**

The year was 1888. On an early September morning the black warships of clouds were sailing rapidly across the roaring river of the sky. The wind smelled a change. The leaves 'lapped up the silence like the tongues of little creatures drinking,' and heavy drops of rain pelted into the dry dust of streets. Little houses were suddenly wrapped in a gauze of torrential downpour. Rains came to Mecca.

In the Qudwah Street, opposite the famous Salam Gate a noble edifice was the centre of attraction on that fine day. People rushed in to offer greetings to Shaikh Mohammad Khairuddin, who was blessed with a son.

The child was named Ahmad after the great Prophet of Islam, and was commonly called Abul Kalam. In his own words the Maulana (the title by which Abul Kalam Azad is now known to the public), says:

'This stranger to the age, unknown to the time, and unacquainted to self; this abode o

vain hopes and a ruin of hopelessness, who is named Ahmad and styled as Abul Kalam, entered this field of non-existence appearing like that of existence in the year 1888 A.D., corresponding with Zul-Hijja, 1305 A.H.'

His father called him by the historic name of '*Firuz Bakht*' (of Victorious Fortune) and took out a chronogram of the year of his birth from the following hemistich:

“جوان بخت و جوان طالع، جوان باد”

“Of young luck and young fortune, may he remain young.”

While wind autographed the sand-dunes of Arabia and the streets of Mecca again became dusty, Ahmad grew into a round-headed, fat-cheeked and fair-coloured child.

To be of the noble birth gives one a peculiar distinction among people. Abul Kalam was favoured of fortune from his tender age. His childhood was 'a sweet dream,' he says; but he did not grow into a spoilt child in that age of sweet dreams. He was just shy and stubborn, and if some one tried to make him not shy, he would become more stubborn.

While rich men, poor men, beggar men tramped along the streets, and the half-baked, tawny children ran about barefooted with sand spilling from between their toes, Abul Kalam's drama pulsating with life and thrilling with achievements began in Mecca.

## II

He was born scholar, this Ahmad Abul Kalam. He learnt Arabic in the lap of his mother, Persian and Urdu at the feet of his father, and Islamic theology, arts and sciences from an old Arab teacher who was a friend of his father. From his early childhood he became familiar with the liturgy of Islam, and stamped in his memory the noble words and vigorous phrases of the holy Quran.

There was not a slow or lazy bone in his body, and being endowed with a sharp intelligence and extraordinary efficiency for a quick grasp of facts, he did not merely dabble around the edges of the pool of learning like ordinary students, but plunged into its depths and came out victorious. His great interest in his early days lay in the study of the life and achievements of the Prophet, the victories of his noble companions, and the memorable sacrifices and services of the revered martyrs of Islam. Another was his passionate desire to learn the holy Book by heart, and thus become a venerable *Hafiz* of the Quran.

While thus engulfed with or rather submerged in the pool of learning, Ahmad had to shift his environs from one centre of Great Civilization to another. He had to leave Mecca with his parents and come over to Calcutta, where his father was to settle for the rest of his life.



He was a stripling of ten when the family landed at Calcutta. Here was a town with a world of difference from his place of birth. It bustled with people of diverse nationalities and creeds. It offered an excellent opportunity to Abul Kalam to satiate his thirst for knowledge.

Abul Kalam's progress in Calcutta was phenomenal, for trees that are transplanted some time thrive better under new skies than their natural habitat. That the book-lovers are born and not made, is an axiomatical saying; but peering back into his youthful past we find that there was something in him which drove him farther in quest of knowledge. When he saw books he knew they locked treasures between their pages which he wished to explore. 'Each one became a pirate's chest filled with diamonds of knowledge and nuggets of information which he desired to possess.'

He was admitted to the *Dars-i-Nizami* course at Calcutta which covered the well-known standard Oriental Curriculum of those days for the graduation of students in Islamic theology and divinity. The course usually extended over a period of fourteen years, and a student was supposed to get a thorough grounding in Islamic theology, Hadith, Fiqh, philosophy, principles of mysticism, history, geography, mathematics, and jurisprudence, besides Arabic, Persian and Urdu literature and

grammer. The truly amazing versatility of Abul Kalam's talents and his achievements in diverse branches of arts and sciences can well be imagined by knowing the fact that he compressed this fourteen years' standard course into four years only. The more he worked upon the books, the more enthusiastic he became in his studies.

This prodigious boy, who out-professed his professors, was looked upon with wonder and esteem both by his fellow students and his masters. In order to pass the final examination of the *Dars-i-Nizami* course, a student was required to attain a certain standard in the practice of teaching and public speaking as well. Thus Abul Kalam became both a teacher and a public-speaker at the tender age of fourteen.

Of these days, there is an interesting tale about him. Abul Kalam was asked once to teach logic to an old logger-headed Pathan who was yet a student of a secondary class in his fifties. For days he tried to put into his brains the difference between the Induction and Deduction, but in vain. The fatherish pupil proved amazingly dull of wits. The pupil-teacher was much vexed over the Pathan. He admonished him that he was a duffer, and taunted him by saying that it was better for him to go back to his native hills and eat grass like sheep and goats. The old man was very much dejected and disheartened, and went without

meals for the whole of that day. When Abul Kalam's father came to know about this incident, he called the young teacher, and rebuked him of his behaviour. He said that the old man was of the age of his father, and he should not have mistreated him. Abul Kalam was asked to go up to the old pupil's place and beg his pardon.

He saw the unfortunate old man in his room. The fellow said that since he (Abul Kalam) was his teacher, it was but meet if he had treated him in that manner. Abul Kalam asked for pardon and did not leave the old man until he partook of his meals.

Thus, under constant guidance of his revered father he became, at a very young age, a well-behaved gentleman, an omnivorous reader, a brilliant teacher and a perfect speaker, who could call from hundreds of authorities moral maxims, bits of poetry, historical, legal, ethical and philosophical disquisitions and make his audience spell-bound.

### III

Abul Kalam's father was a gentleman of the old school having simple manners, plain native dress, retiring temperament, and conservative ideas. He had thousands of disciples around him, but he did not like the idea of calling at their houses, except on the rare

occasions of the Eeds or the birthday of the Prophet. He had a dislike of modern things and no one saw him wearing a coat of the Western cut or keeping any semblance of the English furniture in his house.

Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan was the first Indian Muslim to raise the standard of revolt against conservatism of his co-religionists. While he preached the importance of the study of the English language and modern sciences for Indian Muslims to stand the coming struggle for existence, Abul Kalam's father had a keen aversion against such an ideal. He thought that the Christian missionaries, by introducing English education in India, were aiming at the domination of the Christian religion, culture and civilization over Islam. Therefore, to him the English schools were the places for infidels rather than the true believers. It was, thus, impossible for Abul Kalam to get any education and training at a Western institute; but the talented young boy was not denied higher education by his learned father.

In 1905 Abul Kalam was sent for higher studies to that Mecca of the Oriental Scholastic world—the Al-Azhar University of Cairo in Egypt. The boy coming of a noble family of the Muslim divines and religious heads was expected to get the best possible training in Islamic studies, and no other place fitted him best than Azhar.

Thus he seized with eagerness the opportunity of visiting another centre of a great civilization of the East, and on an early September morning entered that beautiful home of knowledge with its great rafters and mellow archways.

Azhar's facilities for burnishing his mind were far superior to those of the little mat-spread *maktabs* of Arabia or India; and Abul Kalam took advantage of them as time afforded.

His mind was bright, quick and retentive, as always, and he possessed the knack of going to the very heart of problems. Thus, here again he waded through the four years' long course in only a couple of years' time.

Arising from this book-eating process, he looked in about him for more mental worlds to conquer. He made his mark not only as a scholar of Arabic and Persian languages, but as a theologian he showed himself master of a trade that knew no depressions.

He returned to India in 1907 after successfully passing the examination at Azhar and travelling on his way back through the renowned centres of Islamic civilization and culture, like Syria, Palestine and Iraq.

Within a period of two years a considerable change had taken place in Azad's mental world. What was dormant had been awakened; what was non-existent had been created.

To him was revealed a conception of patriotism and devotion to public duty which was to mould the rest of his life, and above all to him was taught the freeman's song to break the shackles of slavery.

#### IV

Abul Kalam's life was more eventful on his return to India.

The first thing he now learnt was to fall without getting hurt!

On a lovely day, while the golden, tenuous imaginings were starting in his mind by the sands and trees and sea, he met a pair of 'sleepy eyes that spoke to the melting soul'. Says Abul Kalam, "Suddenly the Divine Felicity dawned in the form of worldly love, and the rambles of lustfulness carried me unawares upon the high road of tender passion and love. While the flames of fire kindle slowly, and the waves of storm rise gradually, this incident was nothing short of a lightning which flashed, fell down and vanished suddenly, leaving nothing behind except a heap of cinders."<sup>1</sup>

"I mean by this love," explains Abul Kalam, "the worldly passion or infatuation, and not the Divine Love. . . for certainly

1. *Tazkira*, (Calcutta) 1919, pp. 294-5.

it was a slip. But what would you call such a slip that brings you down to the feet of the Beloved? The ultimate goal is to reach up to Him through all actions; so if our infatuation and staggering itself leads us to Him, why should then a thousand stabilities be not sacrificed over it. But these are the talks of the path of sublime love.”<sup>1</sup>

Love you cannot help as hate you cannot help. Abul Kalam was under this spell of passion for about a year and a half. He had all the experience of a Romeo and a Farhad in that brief span of time; and as it was to happen, the matter ended in a big NO, and his lady-love disappeared into the golden haze.

Abul Kalam became steadier after that event. He says:

شاد باش ای عشق خوش سودائے ما  
 اے طیب جملہ علتہای ما  
 ای دوائی نخوت و ناموسی ما  
 اے تو افلاطون و جالینوسی ما

Cheerio, O our Love of happy infatuation,  
 Thou art the physician for all our ailments;  
 Thou art the recipe for all our honour and dignity,  
 Thou art Plato and Galen for us!

This experience in love made him saner, wiser and more devoted to the study of

1. *Tazkira*, p. 299.

aesthetics and ethics, and soon after that he made his debut in the field of Islamic divinity and jurisprudence.

## V

That tall and lanky boy—Abul Kalam—showed great enterprise, guts, imagination and tenacity. During the years when he was on-the-make, his mind was never at rest. With an amazing alacrity he leaped from one subject to another. He was vitally alive mentally, and could converse on whatever topic he chose; but he was destined to win his ends both by his silver tongue and his steel pen. His mind was alert and always on the lookout for new facts to add to his store of knowledge which now began to find an outlet in the form of his essays and writings.

His father died at Calcutta in 1909, and it was expected that the brilliant boy would step into his revered ancestors' profession to guide thousands of the followers of his late father, but Abul Kalam disappointed them all. The old disciples begged for his attention, and his pupils clamoured for the investment of his talents, but he had caught a new call which seemed to come from some far off world. It was the call of Mother India, the call for freedom in the unity of the country, and the call for the political revival of India. Therefore, instead of sitting in the cosy seat of



a spiritual leader, he adopted a harder, difficult and strenuous way of life to save the masses from the pitfalls of blind dogmatic superstitions and lead them towards an enlightened and broadminded faith; to free the minds of his country-men of all that makes for inter-communal misunderstandings, and to inspire them by his own examples of hardships and sacrifices.

India for generations had been caste-ridden and priest-ridden; the people, unaccustomed to use their own judgment, were swayed by emotions of hatred and prejudice. But by linking his ability to Godly power, Abul Kalam pushed himself into the national limelight within an amazingly brief space of time, and the world made way for him who knew where he was going.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Rise of the Crescent

*Divide and Rule* was the weapon which the British picked up from the field of Indian Mutiny of 1857. Lt.-Col. John Coke, the Commandant at Moradabad wrote in a letter :

“Our endeavours should be to up-hold in full force the separation which exists between the different religions and races, not to endeavour to amalgamate them. *Divide et impera* should be the principle of Indian Government.”<sup>1</sup>

Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, in a minute dated May 14, 1859, wrote in support of the above view: *Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto and it should be ours.”<sup>2</sup>

Lord Dufferin became the Viceroy of India in 1884 and, soon after taking over the charge of his office, invited Mr. Allan Octavian Hume to organize a political body which was to be known as the Indian National Congress.

1. *India's Fight for Freedom* by Sardul Singh Caveeshar, (Lahore 1936), p. 427.

2. *Ibid.*

Accordingly its first session was held in the following year in Bombay under the Presidentship of W.C. Bonnerji. At this occasion, while on the one hand, the Congress delegates were invited to garden parties by the representatives of the Government, on the other hand they were being divided into two hostile and incompatible camps. Says Lord Dufferin, "The most potent characteristic of our Indian cosmos is its division into two mighty communities as distinct from each other as the poles asunder in their religious faith, their historical antecedents, their social organizations and their natural aptitudes; on the one hand, the Hindus numbering 190 millions, with their polytheistic beliefs, their temples adorned with images and idols, their veneration for the sacred cow, their elaborate caste distinctions and their habits of submission to successive conquerors—on the other hand, the Mahomedans a nation of 50 millions, with their monotheism, their iconoclastic fanaticism, their animal sacrifices, their social quality and their remembrance of the days when enthroned at Delhi they reigned supreme from the Himalayas to Cape Camorin." Thus the *divide et impera* propaganda was on the move.

"Clever and insidious attempts were made to cultivate among the Muslims class hostility against the Congress, and Sir Auckland Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the N.-W.

Provinces, argued with Mr. A. O. Hume about the Congress provoking a counter-agitation among the Muslims."<sup>1</sup>.

This counter-agitation was started under the leadership of that giant among the men of his age—Sir Sayyed Ahmad Khan, who founded the Aligarh M. A.-O. College, and with the introduction of the Western education, science and culture in the country, preached the gospel of strict loyalty to the British Crown.

The followers of Sir Sayyed's Aligarh school of thought were fit instruments for the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the Government. Thus unconsciously Sir Sayyed became a means of the Imperialistic policy of the British by "stopping the Muslims from all political activities, and by opposing the Congress." He started a political party known as the *Mushtarka Jamaite Muhibbane Hind* (The Joint Committee of the Lovers of India) about which he wrote to Major-General Graham in 1888 that 'the aim of this party is to oppose the political ideal and activities of the Congress.' In the same year, when the session of the Congress was being held at Calcutta, he inaugurated a Muslim Educational Conference in the same city with the idea of detracting the attention of Muslims from the former.

1. Mahadev Desai, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

Thus says Sir Valentine Chirol, "So great and enduring was the hold of Sir Sayyed Ahmad's teachings upon the progressive elements in Mohamedan India that the All-India Muslim League was founded in 1905 almost avowedly in opposition to the subversive activities which the Indian National Congress was beginning to develop."

Abul Kalam was just a boy not over sixteen when this double game of driving his countrymen towards communalism and slavery was rife in India. His young mind was keenly realizing the necessity for some sort of union between the two factions created in the country; but the consciousness of solidarity, the community of ideals and interests which constituted an essential part of patriotism, hardly existed at that time. Still he was not in any sense a book-worm, even though he read enormously, and it was by his sudden attention towards the political events in the country that his national role began at such a tender age. This steel-brittle lad toughened up his mental resolve and entered the fourth estate to prepare the Muslims for the part they were called upon to play in the life of the country. He first became the Editor of *Nairang-i-Alam*, and thereafter started his own paper called, *Lisan-us-Sidq* (the Tongue of the Truth) whereby he planted his feet upon the highway that was to lead him to a new kingdom which he must possess.

Abul Kalam's writings were acclaimed throughout the length and breadth of India, and eminent scholars like Shaikh (afterwards Allama Sir) Mohammad Iqbal, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad, Maulana Hali and Khan Bahadur (now Sir) Abdul Qadir were simply enamoured of the versatility of his talents. Consequently, in recognition of Abul Kalam's ability and depth of learning, the Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam, the premier Muslim organisation of Lahore, invited him in 1904 to deliver the annual address speaking on 'The Rational Basis of Religion.'

This was a signal recognition of the prestige of the young Editor of *Lisan-us-Sidq*, but no one dreamt of a tall slip of a boy, straight and thin daring to address a meeting of greyheaded scholars on such a difficult subject. Necks stretched to glimpse the speaker. With gay eyes filled with intense glee of living and a flash of smile, Abul Kalam greeted his audience. People thought that Abul Kalam had just sent up his son to read the address on his behalf, but when the little man was introduced as no other but Abul Kalam himself, all were struck with wonder and amazement. His voice rose and rose, and on that evening his scholarship, erudition and ability shot him into the limelight of public acclaim. He was thereafter called the *Maulana* or 'Our Leader'.

## II

Abul Kalam, whom great men of letters like Hali, Shibli and Nawab Muhsin-ul-Mulk acclaimed as 'an old head on young shoulders', was considered as a prodigy of the age. His writings were always given a prominent place in famous papers of India. He edited *Al Nadwah*—a religious paper of distinction, in 1905, and *Wakil*—another well-known paper coming out from Amritsar, in 1907. Besides these activities, he wrote very fine verses for which he always became the centre of attraction in the poetical contests, where on a set hemistich he often used to roll out verse after verse on the spot putting his audience to wonder and astonishment. His *nom de plume* 'Azad' (Free) thus became associated with the words 'Maulana Abul Kalam' due to his great reputation in these poetical symposiums.

Lord Curzon returned to India in 1904 to complete his term of the Viceroyalty. He came back aiming at an increased administrative efficiency, which his successor, Lord Minto (1905—10) tried to carry out to the best. They found the followers of the Aligarh school of thought fit for the promotion of their policy so much so that in 1906 "Lord Minto was in a position to take the active step of having a 'Command performance' in the shape of a deputation headed by His Highness the Agha

Khan to wait upon him to press the demand of communal representation."

In the same year 'a Machiavellian device' was conceived to defeat the national movement by splitting up the province of Bengal, which was playing a leading roll in the political regeneration of the country. "The province of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, whose total population stood at 70, 800, 000 was under one Lieut.-Governor, and his advisers thought on purely administrative grounds that it was humanly impossible to govern effectively so vast an area. Moreover, the political stir in the country and the conflict of interest put great pressure on the Indian and the English staff, who found it difficult to meet all the contingencies and emergencies which arose. The partition of Bengal was considered a means to meet the situation."<sup>1</sup>

This ill-advised partition "gave Indians a shock such as had not been experienced since many decades. It stirred up violent nationalism not only in Bengal but elsewhere in the country. It furnished a test case and invited a trial of strength between what was universally regarded as the policy of 'divide and rule' and the resistance of public opinion."<sup>2</sup>

The country made a violent protest, and a

1. *Muslim India* by Mohd. Noman (Allahabad, 1924), p. 65.

2. *The Indian National Congress* by F. M. De Mello, (Bombay 1934), p. 34.



prolonged agitation was set up to check this action of the Government. Agitation was the talk of the day. "Agitation," said Dadabhoy Naoroji at the Calcutta Session of the Congress in the same year, "is the life and soul of the whole political, social and industrial history of England. . . The whole parliament, press and platform is simply all agitation. Agitation is the civilized peaceful weapon of moral force, and infinitely preferable to brute physical force, when possible. . . Agitate; agitate means inform. Inform the Indian people what their rights are and why they should obtain them, and inform the British people of the rights of the Indian people, and why they should grant them. If we do not speak they say we are satisfied. If we speak we become agitators! The Indian people are properly asked to act constitutionally, while the Government remains unconstitutional and despotic."

Abul Kalam saw all these events happening in the country; but he found that while the Hindus were struggling to free themselves from the foreign yoke, his own Muslim brethren were bent upon loyalty to the British rule. The contrast was appalling. He wondered at the sorry plight of his people, and after much thought and deliberation, resolved to go ahead for their rescue by working a revolution among them. This, he thought, could be achieved first by launching an active propaganda and

creating a rebellion against the Aligarh School of Thought, and next by tearing the people off the stand of loyalty and blind faith in the British rule fostered by the so-called friends of the Muslims.

Charged with these motives, the goodwill harbinger of the time—Abul Kalam Azad, started his famous paper *Al-Hilal* (the Crescent) on June 1, 1912, from Calcutta.

### III

The dawn of *Al-Hilal* was an event of great importance. It was nothing short of a revolution in Urdu journalism. Its style was a match to the best amongst the Western journals, and its policy was reactionary. Besides, clear, precise and meticulous presentation of facts, its most notable feature was the new method of approach in all subjects.

The Maulana's activities were varied and his interests diversified, passing at all times from one subject to another, but for every aspect of the national well-being, he found a remedy from the Quran. Thus, for the political, social and cultural reconstruction of his Countrymen, he propagated the study of the Quran as the basic necessity.

His style of writing has influenced and inspired the scholars and writers during the last thirty years. But at the beginning of

his career as a journalist, he felt a grave necessity of an immediate revolution in the Muslim mind, and *Al-Hilal* was the medium through which he wanted to achieve this object. The good spirit of him wormed its way into the hearts of men, and it was during these days that he learned how to make others think of him in terms of ability. Along with his political essays, he started a series of religious discourses which inspired both the scholar and the layman. His encyclopædic curiosity and the versatility of his mind was for him the admiration of his contemporaries. He laid the foundation of a new school of rational criticism about the fundamental and vital problems of life, but he was too practical-minded to waste much time in mere theorizing, or in theological and metaphysical disquisitions. He was more interested in application than in disinterested research.

The very spirit of 'a crusade against the forces of political reaction and narrow communalism' breathes from the pages of *Al-Hilal*, which are founts of ideas rather than mere repertories of facts, revealing an extraordinary capacity for absorbing knowledge and a most remarkable independence of thought. Hitherto the Muslims used to look upon the Aligarh School as the authority and the final approach in matters political and religious, but since it had badly failed to come up to the

political needs of the hour, the Maulana's writings in *Al-Hilal* proved as the prime awakener and inspirer to all. He initiated a vigorous campaign against this school 'and invited the Muslims to co-operate with the Congress in liberating the country from the foreign domination.' The politicians of the old school of thought were shocked at the powerful attacks made on them by the stark radicalism of the Maulana, but nothing could stem the tide of *Al-Hilal* which slowly made its way into the hearts of the public.

#### IV

How far Islam promotes nationalism ?

What is the attitude of Islam towards other religions ?

Why should the Muslims join hands with the Hindus ?

*Al-Hilal* was a digest of profound reading on the Government, law, ethics, philosophy and religion, but the Maulana was incessantly busy answering such vital questions of political importance, and the way in which he treats the subjects, shows that such an attainment could only be reached if the author was moved to his innermost depths with the love of freedom in unity of the people of this unfortunate land.

He made it clear that the Prophet of Islam proclaimed the truth of the human brotherhood immediately after he delivered the message of monotheism and his Prophethood. The Prophet used to pray: "O God, I bear witness that all people are brothers to one another. Differences they might have created amongst themselves, but You have united them together with a single bond of humanity." 'Thus' the Maulana said, just as the monotheism of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad are facts to be believed by every Muslim, this also must not be denied that all human beings are brothers to one another. While promoting patriotism and nationalism, Islam strongly opposes all communal and racial prejudices and speaks of them in terms of prejudgment and ignorance.'

(About the attitude of Islam towards other religions, the Maulana wrote that while the teachings of different religions, and the beliefs and actions of their respective followers were two different things, people unfortunately ignored the former and looked only to the latter for seeking the truth. The Quran says<sup>1</sup> that all religions are right, but the followers of all of them have deviated from the right course. Whatever differences, clashes and fights for any claim there may be, they are due to the beliefs and actions of the followers of the

1. *Al-Hilal* No. 13, "Islam Aur Sazai Qatl."

respective religions, for )

مذہب نہی سکتا آپس میں دیر رکھنا

‘ Religion does not preach animosity amongst us.’

Thus the Quran has approved of all religions and condemned the followers of all of them.

“For the past thousand years,” says the Maulana in the same article, “the Hindus and Muslims are in close contact, but they are still ignorant of one another’s ways. I have thought several times, that if we could find out some means of removing this ignorance from amongst us, a great amount of our differences and fears would vanish off by itself ; but alas, no remedy has been found up till this moment.”

Says the Maulana<sup>1</sup> : “Today it is proclaimed publicly about Islam that according to its teachings, there is no value attached to the life of a non-Muslim, and if a Muslim kills such a person with the intention of spreading his religion, it will be deemed as waging a holy war against the infidel ; but would to God that such people had known that it is the same Islam, which, at the very height of its domination, and at a time when the world could hardly think of the equality of human life and status, had announced the regulation that a non-Muslim’s blood was as valuable as that of a Muslim. This was not merely a lip-

1. *Al-Hilal* No. 13, under “Islam and Sazai Qatl.”

sermon, but a perpetual and existing law of the Islamic state, right from the times of the early Caliphs down to the last of the Islamic kingdoms. Islam gave all rights of equality to the non-Muslims except one, and that was that they could not become the head of a sovereign state."

That why the Muslims should join hands with the Hindus in the political struggle of the country, was a question asked by many people on various occasions for explanation by the Maulana. Some of them even misrepresented certain verses of the Quran to show that it was against Islamic principles to associate with the followers of other religions for any united action. Its explanation was given by the Maulana in a very simple manner. He wrote: "I tell you of a very easy point to grasp. The Quran has permitted the Muslims to marry the Christian and Jew women. The matrimonial alliance is a bond of love and attachment, and where such an alliance is agreeable, the husband shall be a lover of the wife, and no other tie shall be dearer to him than that one. Then, if the Quran does not allow the Muslims to have any contact at all with the non-Muslims, how is it possible to permit Muslims to make non-Muslim persons the very queens of their hearts and homes, and to put within their charge their entire worldly affairs?"

Herein lies the key to the Hindu-Muslim unity.

## CHAPTER V

### Clouds Over the Crescent

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stepped to the platform of the nation.

His plan combined wisdom with practicability, and thus he was the best man to fight against the apathy that blanketed all India like a fog. He planned to build up a house according to his own plans. He decided to construct for himself, with material carefully chosen, an intellectual house in which he intended to live.

He knew how to handle men and how to take things by their smooth handle. There was nothing quixotic about him, and he never tried to fight against windmills, nor did he break his head against blank walls. *Al-Hilal* captured the Muslim mind in an amazingly brief span of time. Within six months its circulation went up to eleven thousand copies, and before the end of its first year of issue, the figures soared as high as twenty-five thousand.

In his paper he made no attempt whatsoever, to conceal the differences that existed



between his ideals and that of the Aligarh School; nor did he ever attempt to colour unpleasant reality with idealistic camouflage. He thus gave the nation a chance to choose between two entirely different courses. The opponents of the *Al-Hilal* policy objected very strenuously at first. The 'rich, proud, hectoring, swearing, squibbling, carnivorous animals' who lived in the country at that period of stagnation, thumped their fists in anger, but the unlimited confidence which the Maulana had in himself, convinced him that if they went wrong for a time, they would soon admit their mistake. And so did it happen. [Great jurists and leaders like the Shaikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan of Deo-Band, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Dr. Iqbal and even that erudite scholar—Maulana Mohammad Ali, who was a staunch supporter of the Aligarh School, acclaimed the services of *Al-Hilal* and accepted the ideal of the young Maulana.

Events had proved that there existed in the country a huge body of people who had been slumbering and their leaders had almost steered the ship into a foreign port; but the clarion-call of *Al-Hilal* was listened to from the Khybar Pass to Cape Camorin and from Calcutta to Karachi, and awoke them from their heavy sleep. No man of the day wrote more brilliantly, employed larger artifices of style, metaphors, comparisons than him. No

scholar was so gifted as he in clothing his ideas in the flowing garments of mythology and bejewelling his sentences with the pearls of the Quranic phrases.

The people were enlightened of the gravity of their political state. They looked at the Maulana as their lodestar, and lionised the young scholar everywhere.

The explosion of the fiery propaganda of *Al-Hilal* achieved its height when the Maulana took up the cause of the Muslim States abroad which were being gradually threatened by the surging storm of the Christian powers of Europe. Sir Valentine Chirol speaks of the state of affairs in India at that time in the following words :

“ A new generation of young Mahomedans had nevertheless been growing up who knew not Seyyid Ahmed and regarded his teachings as obsolete. The lessons which they learnt from their Western education were not his. They were much more nearly those that the more ardent spirits among the Hindus had imbibed, and they were ready to share with them the new creed of Indian Nationalism, in its most extreme form. Other circumstances were tending to weaken the faith of the Mahomedan community in the good-will, not only of the Government of India, but of the British Government. Even the most conserva-

tive Mahomedans were disappointed and irritated by the revision of the Partition of Bengal in 1911 when the predominantly Mahomedan Province of Eastern Bengal, created under Lord Curzon, was merged once more into a largely Hindu Bengal. The more advanced Mahomedans had been stirred by the revolutionary upheaval in Constantinople to seek contact with the Turkish Nationalist leaders who now ruled the once great Mahomedan Power in the world, and they learnt from them to read into British foreign policy a purpose of deliberate hostility to Islam itself inspired by dread of the renewed vitality it might derive from the returning consciousness in many Mahomedan countries of their own independent nationhood. In that light they see in the British occupation of Egypt, in the Anglo-French agreement with regard to Morocco, and the Anglo-Russian agreement with regard to Persia, and last, not least, in the Italian invasion of Tripoli, the gradual development of a scheme in which all the powers of Christendom were involved for the extinction of the temporal power of Islam and, with it inevitably, according to orthodox doctrine, of its spiritual authority. The Ottoman Empire had been saved for a time by the protection extended to it, for her own purposes, by Germany who had alone stood between it and the disintegrating machinations of the 'European Concert' in Constantinople, bent on under-

mining the ascendance of the ruling Mahomedan race by its menacing insistence on reforms for the benefit of the subject Christian races which could result only in the further aggrandisement of the independent Christian States already carved out of the Sultan's former dominions in Europe and in the introduction of similar processes even into their Asiatic dominions."

The Balkan War started as a result of the great European conspiracy in 1912. As it was directed against Turkey, the Muslims of India were greatly agitated and annoyed at such an action. They started collecting funds to help the suffering Turks. The Maulana's pen had never been so vehement in its denunciation of the usurpations of the European powers as at that time. Besides, Maulana Mohammad Ali and his brother Maulana Shaukat Ali, too, laid down their differences and began to breathe a new spirit of action and agitation among the people of India through their famous organs—*Comrade* and *Hamdard*. People like Wilfrid Blunt appealed to the Indians to abandon their 'narrow communal differences' and work under a united front.

Matters seemed to be on the mend. Sir Sayyad Wazir Hasan, who was the Secretary of the Muslim League at that time (1913), and was till then opposing the policy of the Maulana, saw the positive necessity of preserv-

ing India's political unity for seeking freedom from the foreign yoke. He, therefore, came to Calcutta and after a long discussion with the Maulana issued a circular letter asking different persons to express their opinions. As a result of the discussion and further exchange of views and deliberations the Council of the All India Muslim League recommended change in the creed of the League, which was to be the demand of 'self-Government for India' instead of 'loyalty to the British Government, and the attainment of the rights of the Muslims'. Accordingly, in April 1913, the Muslim League, at its annual Session held at Lucknow, adopted the following resolution:

'The All-India Muslim League places on record its firm belief that the future development and progress of the people of India depends on the harmonious working and co-operation of the various communities, and hopes that leaders of both sides will periodical-ly meet together to find a *modus operandi* for joint and concerted action in questions of public good.'

## II

World War I began on August 1, 1914. British statesmen were naturally anxious to have the co-operation of the Indians. In the same year the Congress met at Madras where Bhupendranath Basu, the President of the

Session spoke highly of the benefit which India derived from England, and of the material benefit which the British rule conferred upon India. The Congress, therefore, offered its whole-hearted loyalty and devotion to His Majesty during the war crisis. "Politics petered out and sank into insignificance," says Jawaharlal Nehru. "The Defence of India Act held the country in its grip." Even Mahatma Gandhi who returned from South Africa in those days, and captured the imagination of the rank and file of the country helped the British in drawing Indians to its side in no small a degree. He declared: "Every fit person of India should help the British Government at this crisis, because it is only after such a service that India can honourably become an equal partner of the British."<sup>1</sup> Even the eminent leader of the Muslim League, Maulana Mohammad Ali supported this attitude in his *Comrade*:

"All truly loyal people have closed the Chapter of civic controversy with the officials and into that book they are likely to look no more. Whatever our grievances, whatever reforms we desire, everything must wait for a more reasonable occasion. Even if the Government were to concede to us all that we ever desired or dreamt; if for instance, the

1. *Hayat-i-Siyasi* by Mohammad Mirza, (Delhi, 1943), p. 64.

Muslim University were offered to us on our own terms, or the Press Act repeal were to be announced; or even if Self-Government were to be conceded to us, we would humbly tell Government this is no time for it, and we must for the present decline such concessions with thanks. Concessions are asked for and accepted in peace. We are not Russian Poles. We need no bribes ! ”

Thus, both the Congress and the League chalked out a definite policy of loyalty to the British during the war. But Azad was a man of different mettle. His voice rose higher and higher against foreign atrocities through the columns of *Al-Hilal*. He created a new life amongst the people to whom he asked to unite and go ahead; but the Government seriously viewed the boldness and slashing attitude of the Maulana at such a juncture. Never had he been so positive of the necessity of preserving Indian nation from the foreign influences. And this was not with him *a priori* view, it was the result of his observations more than of his theories.

The machinery of the Government came into action and handles were stacked against Azad. His connections with the revolutionary element of Bengal were traced out and his activities were closely watched by the C. I. D. Azad's days of liberty seemed to be numbered. In November, 1914, the *Pioneer*, an English

daily of Allahabad wrote a leading article entitled: "Pro-Germanism in Calcutta" inviting the attention of the Government to take immediate action against Abul Kalam.

"*Al-Hilal*," it wrote, "is a weekly illustrated newspaper published in the Urdu language in Calcutta, and is edited by a Delhi Mussalman named Abul Kalam. It has a large circulation among Mussalmans in these provinces and probably in other parts of India. Ever since the war broke out, its attitude has been so strikingly pro-German that it must be a matter of amazement to all who read the paper that the Government has managed to tolerate its writings. Possibly this may be accounted for by the fact that the paper attracts little or no attention in Calcutta itself owing to its being published in Urdu, and there can be little doubt that this was one of the main causes which led the editor to choose Calcutta as the place of publication. Another reason may be that the style of the most mischievous articles is very allusive and full of veiled sneers and sarcasms and innuendoes, most of which either disappear or lose their effect when translated into English, and it is not likely that many European officials read the paper in the original. . ."

In conclusion, the *Pioneer* summed up: "The obvious intention of the writer of these lines is to make his co-religionists believe that



Germany is invincible and that the power of the British Empire can do nothing to resist its attacks. . . We may safely say that a Government which at such a time as the present allows a British subject to publish unchecked malicious insinuations against British soldiers and sailors at any rate may lay claim to the possession of a most un-Germanic spirit of toleration."

For eighteen months after the publication of this article the Government watched the Maulana's attitude, but his fearless criticism, his straightforwardness and his powerful way of expression had no ebbing. To him the rights of thinking and publishing his thoughts by speaking or writing were essentially the rights of personal freedom. To him these were the rights which could not be abridged or alienated.

The Government seemed to be profoundly perturbed at the adamant attitude of the Maulana. Steps were, therefore, taken to forfeit the security of the paper and demand a fresh sum of Rs. 10,000 instead.

The Maulana was severely shaken by this incident, but he was not a man to rest upon his oars. He started another paper by the name of *Al-Balagh*, which was a *rechauffe* of the old *Al-Hilal*. This time the Government decided to take more drastic steps, for *Al-Balagh*

was as sharp a thorn as the *Al-Hilal* in its side, and, required to be removed quickly. It, therefore, ordered the Maulana to quit the Province of Bengal within a week's time, and simultaneous to these orders, the Governments of the Punjab, the United Provinces and Madras issued notifications prohibiting his entry within their respective provinces.

On March 30, 1916, Abul Kalam Azad left his Calcutta residence to seek a new abode at Ranchi in Bihar

### III

While Gandhi was exerting his energies in Gujerat for the collection of funds and recruitment of soldiers in his devotion to the success of the British arms, Abul Kalam Azad was forced to go into exile as a condemned person.

He found at Ranchi a refuge free from the din and bustle of the metropolis of India. It was a small place of little importance situated in an area where members of the Munda, Kola, Udaun and other aborigines lived. They were a wild-looking people with hair tumbled and faces deep tanned. Even in that calm and quiet atmosphere the Maulana's solitary abode became a place of activity. Many of his friends and admirers continued calling at his place and carry his message *verbatim* to the

people at large. Such an activity of the Maulana was again the cause of annoyance and perturbation for the Government, which now interned him at this place for an indefinite term. "Here," says the Maulana, "I found in exile that peace of mind and freedom of thought and action which I had been seeking since a long time, but could not be found owing to my multifarious activities. From what the world called an exile and internment, my heart attained the felicity of solitude and treasure of seclusion."

Here Azad got ample time together with peace and tranquillity. It was thus the most opportune moment for him to indulge in his favourite pastime—the study and exposition of the Quran, by which he had created a love of Islamic studies among young Muslims of India. Since his organs of expression—the *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh* were no more alive, he set up writing here his famous commentary on the Quran known today as the greatest work of Abul Kalam Azad.

This memorable work, entitled, *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*, is a commentative translation of the first eight Chapters of the Quran. Sayyad Suleman Nadvi, the eminent scholar of Islamic theology writes about this work in an article: "It is a notable feature of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* that its author understands the spirit of his age, and has adopted the same method

of fighting the evil of Westernism, which Ibn Taimiya and Ibn Qayyim had adopted to dispel the evils which had sprung from the Tartar invasion. Just as they had diagnosed the causes of the downfall of the Muslims of their age in their submission to the Greek philosophy, similarly the author of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* traces out the cause of the deterioration of the Muslims of the day in their blind faith in the Greek and European philosophy.”

The *Tarjuman-ul-Quran* is in fact a significant product of the age, and perhaps the most valuable contribution ever made to the field of Islamic studies by an Indian scholar. What was written by Imam Ghazali and Ibn Qayyim, has been discussed and explained in much greater details and more elaborate form in the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*. This work alone made Abul Kalam's name and fame spread over the entire Islamic world. This work alone was quite enough to make him immortal. But the leisure at Ranchi offered him to produce another work of certain importance known as *Tazkira*, which is a biographical account of the Mulana's noble ancestors, and in which he appends a few pages about his own life as well. In this work he adopted his usual flowery, metaphoric and emphatic style of writing, but it cannot stand a match with the phenomenal fluency and aplomb of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*

which is really a noble piece of work. Still it is to the credit of the Mulana that at Ranchi, when he undertook writing of his *Tazkira*, he was his own source. There were neither any family papers nor any reference books available to him, and he had to depend entirely upon his memory to construct a brilliant piece of historical research covering more than three hundred pages of print.

#### IV

While events changed with kaleidoscopic rapidity in the country, Abul Kalam Azad lay confined at Ranchi. The Muslim population of the place was in extreme misery and ignorance; the Maulana deplored the condition of these people, and felt an urgent need of doing something for them. Thus, his capacity for a precise and minute work was once more brought into play, and with all the enthusiastic zeal of a born leader, he plunged himself into the work of their emancipation and organization.

It was a slow, painstaking and meticulous task, but it is all due to his efforts that the spirit of religious and political consciousness beams forth from these people today. Within a few years' course, they organized their associations, built educational institutions, gathered scholars and sages of repute around them, and found the very spirit of Islam and nationalism surging within them.

Abul Kalam was their helmsman. He radiated geniality and good humour with scholarship and erudition, but he was not the man to speak of himself and his sorrows even to his closest friends. The country required him badly at that hour when the whole world was plunged into the throes of war. The Congress, therefore, passed a resolution demanding his unconditional release, and submitted a memorial to the Government signed by more than sixty thousand people. But the Government showed an unwillingness to order his release until the end of hostilities.

Thus, while the Maulana was confined to the *mahwa* trees, the warm sun, and the *champa* scent of Ranchi, the war came to an end. But not his internment. He had to wait for another year to get the orders of his release from the Government. The amnesty was granted to him by the Royal Proclamation on December 25, 1919, and in the following January the Maulana re-entered Calcutta, as the very symbol of that which make economists thin, artists haggard, thinkers pale, and statesmen bald.

## CHAPTER VI

### **First Rumbles of the Coming Storm**

In November 1916 a joint Session of the Congress and the Muslim League was held at Calcutta under the Presidentship of Sir Surendranath Banerjee. Here the celebrated Lucknow Pact was drafted in the light of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's suggestions and signed by leaders of the said two parties. This introduced a period of exceptional interest in the political history of the country and caused rapid progress in the evolution of Indian political demands.

The Lucknow Pact cleared the communal differences of the Hindus and Muslims, and introduced a unique fraternisation among them for the formulation of a scheme of self-Government.

As a result of these conferences one of the crucial problems of India was now happily solved. A new era of brotherhood between the Hindu and Muslims, with a genuine spirit of accommodation, dawned. The political struggle was thus launched in the right earnest mood.

It seemed now that the Congress and the League, though different in body, were one in soul. 'All were taken by surprise, including the Government, for the unanimity of the Hindus and Muslims in their demand for Home Rule was altogether new.

In July, 1917, a joint meeting of the Council of the Muslim League and the Congress was held in Bombay, where it was resolved that a petition be submitted to the Parliament in support of the scheme of reforms adopted by the League and the Congress. They demanded that 'an authoritative pronouncement be made, pleading the Imperial Government in unequivocal terms to the policy of making India a self-governing member of the British Empire.'

Popular excitement was provoked by lectures, meetings and public discussions. It soon attained such a widespread character that the Government thought it essential to take necessary steps against it. On August 20, 1917, the Government announced the visit of Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India which was something 'dramatic in character and bewildering in its novelty.'

The publication of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in 1918 divided the Congress in two wings. The main reforms related to the provincial Governments but where really



important legislation was concerned, dependence upon the Governor, the Viceroy, and the Secretary of State was essential. Further, the division of subjects into 'reserved' and 'transferred' made Indians suspicious of the British offer.

The real problem lay in the transference of political power and responsibility from the British to the Indian people. Therefore, in the opinion of the Congress, the Montague-Chelmsford Report presented great defects. The right of India to immediate Home Rule was, therefore, boldly asserted by it and as a result thereof, popular feelings were aroused and events of great magnitude occurred.

## II

During the Great War I, the Turks fought on the side of Germans and were the first to be defeated by the Allies. This gave a chance to the Christian nations of Europe to crush the Turkish influence in Europe and weaken the power of the Caliph in Asia.

The question of the Caliphate or *Khilafat* was more dear to an Indian Muslim than anything else at that time. According to the Quranic injunctions, it was essential for Muslims to have a religious head or Khalifa possessing complete independence and authority in his person. It was further considered necessary

in the Islamic administrative organisation that the whole of the Muslim community should stand united behind this Khalifa or Imam, to obey his orders without raising any objections, and to fight the destructive powers of the enemies of Islam with utmost efforts.

Thus, the Muslims believed that their religion was mainly protected by the strong arm of the Caliph, and that as long as his power was safe, Islam was safe.

In 1918, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George had assured the Muslims that the British Government had no intention of depriving the Turks of Asia Minor and Thrace of their independence; but at the end of the war it became evident that the Allies were clearly aiming at nothing short of the complete dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. Thrace, Syria, Palestine, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Egypt—all were snatched from the Turks who were left with the deserted region of Anatolia alone, while the Caliph was kept as a mere toy in the hands of the Allies.

Indian Muslims could not tolerate such a treatment. 'They wanted the Turks to be treated as leniently as possible; but the Lloyd George Ministry wanted to put quite an end to their power. Every effort was made by Indians to secure justice for the Turks, but the British Government strictly kept to the policy

of favouring Greece at the expense of Turkey... The result was that public opinion in India favoured on one side, while the British Government on the other. The want of understanding on both sides led to a revolt of the Indian Muslims, and the struggle did not end till the Turks themselves finished the question of the Khilafat by throwing the Khalifa overboard.'

### III

The end of the Great War I brought dissatisfaction, restlessness and turbulence in its wake. The soldiers, back from the fields of battle, were no longer 'the subservient robots that they used to be.' There was much discontent among them. The Muslim masses were crying hoarse at the wrongs done to the Khilāfat, the extremist section of the Hindus started a campaign for the immediate declaration of Home Rule. A violent discontent was further created by the refusal of the British Columbian authorities to admit Indian immigrants whose ship was driven back to Bengal, and who, when marched on Calcutta in protest, were scattered by the police and hunted down and arrested. Another band of Indians from America, Manila, Shanghai and Hong Kong reached India at about the same time. They were exasperated against the attitude of the Government for whom they had fought during

the war, and which would not now admit them to its colonies. These unhappy circumstances gave rise to a revolutionary movement which was, however, suppressed for the time being under the Defence of India Act.

The Government further appointed a committee under Mr. Justice Rowlatt to consider the situation and to suggest measures against it. Already the Government had used the Defence of India Act, so in the appointment of the Rowlatt Committee the people saw an attempt to continue the restrictions which had been imposed upon them under the stress of the war.

The Rowlatt Bills were passed in spite of the country-wide opposition on the part of Indians of all shades of opinion. Under its provisions 'people could be tried by courts which were empowered to sit *in camera*, and which could accept in certain circumstances the recorded statements of persons dead or missing or otherwise incapable of giving evidence which could be subjected to the test of cross-examination. The judgment of these tribunals would be conclusive. People could be sent to the gallows under this procedure or could be transported for life. It also provided the Executive with authority to search without warrant and to arrest and confine persons without trial almost indefinitely.

The trouble started almost immediately.

The proposals were met with resolute opposition from every quarter. Gandhi, who had just passed through a serious illness, begged the Viceroy not to give consent to the Rowlatt Bills, but his appeal, as others', fell upon deaf ears. Thus, in the teeth of public opposition, the Government pushed through a law the object of which was to court trouble and invite an upheaval in the country. It was, therefore, left for Gandhi to take up the leadership of the crushed, withered and smothered humanity, and start his first All-India agitation known as the Satyagraha Movement. The members of this movement were to disobey the Rowlatt Act as well as other objectionable laws by non-violent action.

On the occasion of the Rama Naumi festival on the 13th April, 1919, the Satyagraha Day was celebrated in India with complete suspension of business in all big towns. At Amritsar, where a large public gathering was to be held in the Jallianwalla Bagh on that day, the Government proclaimed martial law declaring all meetings and political gatherings to be unlawful. The resentment became acute, and the people courted gaol openly and deliberately.

The meeting had just commenced at the said place, when General Dyer arrived at the spot with a machine-gun and a detachment of military soldiers, and having blocked the

only passage of the Bagh, opened fire at the mob, where in the course of ten fateful minutes 1,650 rounds were fired causing 379 deaths and 1,208 serious casualties.

The massacre of the Jallianwalla Bagh shocked the country through and through like a whip of lightning that scourages the sky. The incident exasperated the people, who held sympathetic demonstrations all over the country. The situation became critical, and serious disturbances were feared. Martial law was, therefore, declared in several important towns, and any attempt to criticize the Government, howsoever mildly, was checked by stern measures, suppression of the papers and imprisonment of the persons concerned. The authorities indulged in an orgy of indiscriminate repression showing how humanity was kicked in an unfortunate land.

#### IV

The behaviour of the Government after the Jallianwalla Bagh incident brought serious misgivings among the people. Maulana Mohammad Ali wrote; 'It was reserved for General Dyer to break down entirely the barrier that Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had, for temporary purposes, erected more than thirty years previously, and to summon the Mussalmans of India to the Congress held at Amritsar in 1919 as the unsuspecting Herald of India's Nation-

hood. The bullets of his soldiery made no distinction between Hindu and Muslim, and clearly Providence had so designed things that a community even more loyal than the Mussalmans, namely our brave Sikh brothers, should also dye the sacred soil of their religious capital at Amritsar with their own blood along with that of Hindu and Muslim martyrs. There was the Hand of God."

The refusal of the House of Lords to endorse the censure of General Dyer contained in the Hunter Commission's Report, and the enactment of the Rowlatt Bills simultaneously with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms 'had persuaded the Congress that the British Government was insincere.' Strength was added to the movement by the Khilafat agitation. The British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was aiming at nothing short of the complete dismemberment of Turkey. Indian Muslims were, therefore, highly agitated at such an attitude of the Allies, and under such circumstances in 1919, they formed an association known as the Khilafat Committee. Its aims and objects were to induce the British Government to avoid the occupation of the holy lands of the Muslims. It was a purely Islamic movement, but the Congress, in acceptance of the legitimacy of the objective, joined the Muslims under the leadership of Gandhi.

This Khilafat question along with other

inconveniences and restraints due to war measures, the hardships of high prices, and subsequent famine and epidemic played no mean part in preparing a solid and united front against the Government.

People looked to Gandhi for leadership. The sounds of *Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai* resounded over the political horizon of the country. The hold of Gandhi over the people of every class and community was something unique in the history of the recent years. They saw in him the liberator of the teeming millions.

Pandit Motilal Nehru was the President of the Congress Session held at Amritsar in 1919. It was the first Gandhi Congress. The people met a tall, spindly, ascetic-looking fellow, rather disdainful of finery and careless in his wearing apparel. They had never heard anything that deserved to be matched with what flowed from him, and where he got that torrent of language from, was inconceivable. He was truly a great man.

The National Movement began to take a new shape. The Jallianwalla Bagh incident was just what was needed to set afire the public mind. In appealing to the masses to take part in the political struggle, Gandhi introduced an innovation. It was the gospel of Non-Co-operation. 'The foreign Government in India,' he said, "was fed on Indian co-opera-



tion, and when that co-operation was withdrawn, the Government must tumble down like a building whose foundation had been undermined." The Government was charged with having conducted itself in an unjust and immoral manner in dealing with the Khilafat question and in the question of making amends for the wrongs done in the Punjab during the days of the Martial Law. It was declared that no conscientious man should co-operate with the Government unless it purged itself of its malpractices.

The Non-Co-operation Movement was to be essentially a non-violent struggle, since it originated in a religious atmosphere. The Ali Brothers, who were recently discharged from the Betul Jail, joined the Amritsar Congress. Other Muslim divines and Maulavis, who had seen that the Government was not paying any heed to the demands of the Khilafat Committee came forth and discussed the non-co-operative and non-violent struggle as the means of solving their difficulties.

Indians in general took it up more as a political weapon than as a religious formula, and wanted to try it then for winning the freedom. The issues were sombre and the crisis was grave although the leader of the Movement carefully refrained from giving any encouragement to those who held radical views.

In January 1920, when the entire country was rising to uproot the Government machinery, Abul Kalam was released at Ranchi. At a meeting of the Khilafat Committee held on the 28th February, 1920 in the Town Hall at Calcutta, he declared that if the British Government did not listen to the demands of the Khilafat even at that stage, the Muslims would be obliged by their religious injunctions to sever all loyalist relations with it. Thus, Muslims and Hindus both were united on one point—that India should shake off the British bondage as soon as possible.

The Khilafat Committee came more and more under the influence of Gandhi with whom all the prominent Muslim and Hindu leaders discussed about the method of approach to the Government. Abul Kalam met him in Delhi soon after his release with recharged batteries of his ambition. The leaders decided to send a deputation to the Viceroy to place before the Government the sentiments of Indians regarding Turkey and the Khilafat question; but the Maulana was of the opinion that to hope anything from the Government was chimerical, since the Viceroy was not going to accept their demands. The Maulana, therefore, did not like to go to the Government House as a member of the deputation.

As was expected, the deputation waited upon the Viceroy without any result. He only

assured that if it was decided by the Khilafat Committee to send a deputation to England, he would provide all facilities for the voyage. Maulana Mohammad Ali was ready to go with his shield and spear of eloquence, but Abul Kalam was of the opinion that the old methods of begging, petitioning, waiting in deputation and so on could not be of much avail. They, therefore, had to find some new means of putting pressure upon the authorities.

“The matter was discussed for six hours in the late Hakim Ajmal Khan’s drawing-room,” says the Maulana; “but without any result. Gandhiji thereupon proposed that a sub-committee of two or three people should be appointed to decide the matter in consultation with him. Their decision would then be placed before the bigger Committee. Hakim Sahib and I were selected to form this sub-committee. We accompanied Gandhiji to the late Principal Rudra’s house and were closeted with him for three hours. It was here that Non-Co-operation was conceived.”

A few days after the decision, the Non-Co-operation programme was placed before the public at the Khilafat Conference held at Meerut. The Maulana’s eloquence held the people spell-bound. Unassuming and straightforward, he was at once welcomed with open arms by the Maulavis and Muslim divines. He was so prompt, frank, explicit and decisive

at the committees and in conversations that he soon seized their hearts. In a special conference of the *ulama* at Lahore, where a thousand Muslim divines had gathered, he was unanimously elected as the *Imam-ul-Hind* or the Spiritual Head of India, an honour which a young man of his age had never received in this country, and which he accepted only after great pressure from the Lucknow and Deoband *ulama*.

In September a special Session of the Congress met at Calcutta to consider of the steps necessary for non-co-operation. It was here that the Congress resolved to surrender titles given to Indians by the Government, to boycott councils, schools and law courts; to boycott foreign goods, and the adoption of the home-spun and swadeshi in piece-goods; and reviving home-spinning and hand-weaving. "With this," says Jawaharlal Nehru, "began the Gandhi era in the Congress politics. . . The whole look of the Congress changed; European clothes vanished and soon only *Khadi* was to be seen; a new class of delegates, chiefly drawn from the lower middle classes became the type of Congressmen; the language used became increasingly Hindustani, or some times the language of the province where the Session was held, as many of the delegates did not understand English, and there was also a growing prejudice against using a foreign

language in our national work; and a new life and enthusiasm and earnestness became evident in Congress gatherings.”

Later on, in December of the same year, the resolution of Non-Co-operation was confirmed at the Annual Session of the Congress at Nagpur. Here the Congress laid emphasis on non-violence being the integral part of the Non-Co-operation resolution.

The new gospel of Gandhi took the whole country by storm. Abul Kalam Azad and Hakim Ajmal Khan, with Maulana Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, and Maulana Abdul Bari gave their full support to the movement. All opposition was levelled down and all over the country the meetings were attended by hundreds of thousands of men and women. The movement progressed with unprecedented success. *Khadi* became the fashion of the day. Boys and girls emptied schools and colleges; lawyers gave up their profession; villages started their own private courts to settle disputes, and cottage industries began to have new life and vigour. People flocked at meetings full of excitement, optimism and buoyant enthusiasm. Leaders, young and old, Abul Kalam, Gandhi, Motilal, Jawaharlal, Deshbandhu Das, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajagopalachari and Babu Rajendra Prasad all worked harder than ever before. They were charged with a feeling of intense pride and with a sort of intoxication

that the sense of freedom had put upon their nerves. People poured their precious ornaments, jewellery and wealth into their hands, and within a few weeks a crore of Rupees was collected to run the Non-Co-operation Movement.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Thunder-Storm

The sounds of *Hindu-Mussalman Ki Jai* attained their height during the year 1921. The spell of Gandhi's Non-violent Non-Co-operation talks hypnotised all classes and groups of people for a united action. It was a period of great tension, for the masses were suddenly united over a common cause for the national freedom with religious fervour and fanatic zeal, which irritated and annoyed the Government authorities. "The nerves of many a British official began to give way," says Jawaharlal Nehru. "The strain was great. There was this overgrowing opposition and spirit of defiance which overshadowed official India like a vast monsoon cloud, and yet because of its peaceful methods it offered no handle, no grip, no opportunity for forcible suppression. The average Englishman did not believe in the *bona fides* of non-violence; he thought that all this was camouflage, a cloak to cover some vast secret design which would burst out in violent upheaval one day. . . I learnt one day through a barrister friend that

many English people were thoroughly upset and expected some sudden upheaval in the city. They distrusted their Indian servants, and carried about revolvers in their pockets. I was much surprised and could not make out why any one should contemplate the possibility of a rising in the sleepy and peaceful city of Allahabad just when the very apostle of non-violence (*i.e.* Gandhi) was going to visit us.”<sup>1</sup>

A widespread campaign was waged throughout the length and breadth of the country. Abul Kalam Azad began an extensive propaganda tour of the Punjab, where in defiance of law and authority, he made powerful speeches at mass meetings. This challenging attitude reached its climax in March 1921 when the Maulana in the face of the Seditious Meetings Act, delivered a speech at the Badshahi Mosque at Lahore after the Juma prayers. On the following day the leading exponent of the official viewpoint, *The Civil and Military Gazette* of the Punjab drew, in a leading article, the attention of the Punjab Government towards the Maulana's open defiance of the law and order. The inevitable conflict between the Congress and the Government was about to break out, but in spite of the urge for an immediate action, the Punjab Government could not muster courage to check the Maulana. He, therefore, made a number of

1. *Autobiography* (London 1936), pp. 70-1.



speeches at many an important centre, and was on his way back to Calcutta when suddenly the law was set in motion to stop the liberty of association, speech and press.

In September news reached him of the arrest of the Ali Brothers with five other leaders, — Pir Pagaru, Dr. Kitchlew, Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni, Nisar Ahmad, and Jagat Guru Shankaracharya for having passed a resolution at Karachi which amounted to tampering with the loyalty of the military personnel. Both his and Gandhi's reactions at this moment were remarkable. The Maulana declared in a speech at Calcutta :

“The resolution for which the Ali Brothers have been arrested is a well-known Islamic fact, and it is the duty of every Muslim to proclaim it openly. It was me who first of all prepared that resolution for the Calcutta Khilafat Conference. It was me who had written it with my own pen and it was me again under whose Presidentship it was adopted by the Committee. Later on the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama* met at Delhi and I affixed my signatures on the same resolution which was then prepared in the form of a religious manifesto (*Fatwa*). Thereafter the *Jamiat* held its meeting at Bareilly where again I was the President and where the same resolution was proposed and adopted by a majority vote. . . Again it was me who made similar statements

at Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi and Bombay, wherein I confessed that it was not only my oral expression but something upon which I personally acted and always urged others to act upon. If that was 'conspiracy' or 'sedition', then I admit myself to be guilty a thousand times. It, therefore, was proper for the Government to have taken an action against me before arresting the Ali Brothers who just copied and followed my activities."

Gandhi openly avowed that "the Governor of Bombay does not know that the National Congress began to tamper with the loyalty of the sepoys in September last year, that the Central Khilafat Committee began it earlier, and that I began it earlier still, for I must be permitted to take the credit or the odium of suggesting that India had a right openly to tell the sepoy and everyone who served the Government in any capacity whatsoever that he participated in the wrongs done by the Government. The Conference at Karachi merely repeated the Congress declaration in terms of Islam . . . His Excellency's reference to the Sedition of the Ali Brothers is only less unpardonable than his reference to the tampering. For he must know that sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every non-co-operator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law." This declaration resulted in a manifesto signed

by Gandhi, Abul Kalam Azad and about thirty other eminent leaders declaring that in their opinion it was contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under a system of Government which had brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which had used the soldiery and the police for repressing national aspirations. They further declared that in their opinion it was the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood.

Hundreds of persons from various places repeated this manifesto, but the Government seemed to take no action.

The Ali Brothers and their allies received long sentences of imprisonment, but there were no mass arrests in spite of the general excitement of the public as a result of the flamboyant speeches at innumerable meetings and conferences. The Government did not want to take such steps since the Prince of Wales was coming to India in November and it was desired to have a congenial atmosphere for his reception in the country. But the Congress and the Khilafat Committees, who had already been sick of the attitude of the Government, were more irritated at this news. They announced that the bureaucrats had invited the Prince to prop up their lost prestige. The

people, therefore, were urged to boycott all functions in connection with his visit. Gandhi issued a statement in this connection on the 27th October, 1921 :

“ I have no manner of doubt that the Prince's visit is being exploited for advertising the ‘benign’ British rule in India. It is a crime against us if His Royal Highness is being brought for personal pleasure and sport when India is seething with discontent, when the masses are saturated with disaffection towards the system under which they are governed, when famine is raging in Khulna and the Ceded Districts and when an armed conflict is raging in Malabar : it is a crime against India to spend millions of rupees on a mere show when millions of men are living in a state of chronic starvation. Eight lakhs of rupees have been voted away by the Bombay Council alone for the pageant . . . What are we to do in the circumstances ? We must organise a complete boycott of all functions held in the Prince's honour. We must religiously refrain from attending charities, fetes or fire-works organised for the purpose. We must refuse to illuminate or to send our children to see the organised illuminations. To this end we must publish leaflets by the million and distribute them amongst the people, telling them what their duty in the matter is, and it would be true honour done to the Prince if Bombay

on the day of his landing wears the appearance of a deserted city.

“We must isolate the Prince from the person. We have no ill-will against the Prince as man. He probably knows nothing of the feeling in India, he probably knows nothing about repression . . . To do or to attempt to do any harm to the person of the Prince would be not only cruel and inhuman, but it would be on our part a piece of treachery towards ourselves and him; for we have voluntarily pledged ourselves to be and remain non-violent.”

Lord Reading, the then Viceroy, invited Gandhi through Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who seemed to be anxious to extend a hearty welcome to the Prince of Wales on his arrival and tried to bring a reconciliation between the Congress and the Government. Gandhi requested the Viceroy to call a Round Table Conference of all the political parties in India after releasing the political prisoners. He wanted especially Maulana Mohammad Ali by his side to plan out some means of settlement regarding the Khilafat question, but negotiations broke down completely as the Viceroy could not agree to these demands of the Congress leader. This was followed by the meetings of the Congress at Allahabad and Delhi where Gandhi authorized the organization of civil disobedience in various provinces. This was a clear chal-

lenge to the Government which answered by declaring the Congress volunteer organizations illegal in Bengal, the United Provinces and the Punjab. The challenge was openly defied ; the volunteers were enlisted in huge numbers and their names were published in newspapers. Abul Kalam Azad and Deshbandhu Das's names were at the top in the Bengal volunteers' list. Deshbandhu Das gave a remarkable message to the country at this juncture: "I feel the handcuffs on my wrists and the weight of iron chains on my body. The work of the Congress must be carried on. What matters it whether I am taken or left? What matters it whether I am dead or alive?"

## II

The Prince of Wales landed in Bombay on November 17, 1921.

The Congress greeted him with a country-wide *hartal*, with meetings condemning the British policy, and with bon-fires made of the British goods. The bustling towns of Bombay and Calcutta suddenly assumed 'sepulchral quietness', and no one except a handful of Government officials were left to receive the Prince from place to place.

The Congress and the Khilafat Committees in Bengal headed by C. R. Das and Abul Kalam Azad, respectively, joined hands for the lead in

the province, but the Government could not tolerate their activities any longer. Early in December prominent workers, except Das and Azad, were taken into custody and immediately after that mass arrests began. Pandit Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru were both arrested in Allahabad, and on December 10, the Maulana was also arrested at his residence in Calcutta.

There had been in the air that morning something more than the white sunlight. There had been an anticipation. The Maulana had been expecting his arrest. He declared, "I find that the Government has determined to paralyse and crush the Khilafat and Congress Committees. One by one all our workers have been arrested; our nationalist papers are likely to be stopped at any moment, and while Mr. Das has been left alone in the field, I cannot leave Calcutta at any cost."

"It is a fact," he said rightly, "that the Bengal Government wants to avoid the trouble of arresting me, and only wishes that I should go away from Calcutta. For this purpose, I have been even informed through a friend; but alas, like all other wishes of the Government, this one also is against my wishes . . . By deciding about my arrest, the Government has relieved me of a heavy burden, for God alone knows how cumbersome it had become for me to remain outside the gaol when

Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali, Lala Lajpat Rai and Motilal Nehru had all gone behind the bars. Now that my goal is within sight, my heart is teeming with joy for I am leaving the last but glorious field behind me."

The Maulana was prosecuted under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code for delivering two objectionable speeches in connection with the Non-Co-operation Movement, and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment.

This sentence was considered by the Maulana to be much below his expectations. Since the Congress Working Committee had laid down that "in the event of prosecution or a civil suit being brought against Non-Co-operators, they should not participate in the proceedings beyond making before the court a full statement of facts in order to establish their innocence before the public," it was this reason that the Maulana twanged a universal string by making a great and memorable statement before the court. This statement, like all other writings and speeches of the Maulana, was made in a fine and polished Urdu language, and is generally known today by the name of the *Qaul-i-Faisal* or the 'Final Verdict

Gandhi hailed it as a great statement,—an eloquent thesis giving the Maulana's views on Khilafat and Nationalism, and an oration deserving penal servitude for life.



In this statement, the Maulana made a very clear presentation of his case, too clear and too logical even. The felicitous wording of the statement was not due to a sudden and feverish inspiration; the principles proclaimed therein were not abstract and *a priori* principles, they were distinctly what had directed him from the very beginning of his life.

Greater fame came to him soon after when his fiery eloquence drew down upon him the public admiration.

### III

The *Qaul-i-Faisal* is not only a historical document, it is one of the most outstanding monuments in Urdu literature. It would not, therefore, be out of place to quote here some of the most striking passages<sup>1</sup> of this remarkable document:

“How befitting ’t would be if the cupbearer stigmatizes me of drunkenness ;

For my cup still smells of the drink I had last night.”

Praise be to God Unique.

“I had no intention to give any verbal or written statement here. This is a place where we have neither any hopes to cherish, nor any desires to wish, nor even any complaints

1. Selected and translated by the Author from the original statement published in Urdu under the title, *Qaul-i-Faisal*.

to make. This is only a turnstile without passing through which we cannot reach our destination. Therefore, for a short while, we are obliged to break our journey here even against our own wish. Had it not been so, we would have gone straight away to the jail.

“That is why during the last two years I have always opposed the idea of the Non-Co-operators’ taking any part in the proceedings of the court, although the All-India Congress Committee, the Central Khilafat Committee and the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind* have all permitted that a written statement might be submitted for the information of the public; but personally I have always advised people to prefer silence. I feel that a person who submits a statement in support of his being not guilty, is nevertheless not altogether free from suspicion even though he does it with a view to give an information to the public. It is possible that a modest desire for his acquittal and a vain hope for the acceptance of the truth might be working within him, but the path of Non-Co-operation is something quite clear-cut and straight where nothing of the sort can ever be conceived of.

“Non-Co-operation is the result of utter disappointment from the existing conditions. And this despondency has led to the determination for a complete change. When a person declares Non-Co-operation with the Government, it reveals his dissatisfaction with the ‘justice’

and 'truth-loving' of the Government, and shows his refusal to accept its force based on injustice, with the effect that he sees no other alternative except a change. So, when he is dejected of a power to such an extent that he sees no other alternative but having a change, how can then he expect that it will do him justice as a judge?

"Even if one ignores such a fundamental truth, there will be nothing more than a vain effort to expect acquittal in the present circumstances. It will be a denial of one's own knowledge. No sensible person but the Government would deny the fact that in the present conditions there lies no hope of getting justice from the official law-courts. It is not for the reason that they are composed of such persons who do not wish to do any justice, but because they are based on such a system whereby no magistrate can do justice to the accused with whom the Government itself does not like to have a fair play.

"I want to make it clear here that Non-Cooperation is directed only against the Government, its system and principles and not against individuals."

### **Law-Courts are the Oldest Institutions of Injustice :**

"Like all other conditions of the modern age, the present state of affairs is not new in

any way. History bears witness that whenever the ruling powers took up arms against freedom and truth, the law-courts served as the most convenient and unfailing weapon. The authority of the law-court is a force which can be used both for justice and injustice, and which is the best mode of justice and equity in the hands of a just Government. But for the autocratic and repressive Governments there is no instrument better than this for revenge and injustice. Next to battle-field, the greatest acts of injustice in the world have been committed in the law-courts. Right from the revered founders of religions to the scientific scholars and inventors, there was no holy or righteous group of men which was not produced like criminals before the court. No doubt, most of the evils of the ancient times have vanished by the revolutions of the age, and I admit that the terrible Roman courts of the second century, or the mysterious inquisitions of the middle ages do not exist any more, but I am not prepared to admit that our times have been purged of the emotions under which those courts worked. Those buildings, wherein the terrible mysteries lay, have certainly been demolished, but who can change those hearts which are the grave-yards of human selfishness and the dreadful secrets of injustice? "

### **A Strange But A Grand Place:**

"The iniquities of law-courts form a very

lengthy list, for history has never been able to finish its laments. We find in this list the names of the holy personages like Jesus who was made to stand beside the thieves before a foreign court of his day; we find men like Socrates in it, who had to drink the poison-cup only because he was the most truthful person of his country; we also find the name of the great Florentine martyr to truth—Galilio, who dissembled his own discoveries and observations for the reason that their avowal was a crime in the eyes of the law-courts of his time. I have called Jesus a human being, because according to my belief, he was a holy person who had brought a heavenly message of righteousness and love; but according to the belief of millions of people, he was even higher than that. Still how strange but grand is the convicts' dock where the most righteous and the most condemned people are made to stand beside one another? And even for such a great personality (as Jesus) this place is not unworthy!"

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"I know that the Government claims of being as innocent as an angel, because it has always denied to admit its faults. But I also know that it has never claimed to be the Messiah. Then why should I hope that it will love its adversaries? It will do the same what it is doing now and what autocracy has always done against liberty. This is such a fundamen-

tal truth that therein lies no room for complaint or grumble for either party. Both of them should, therefore, go on doing their respective jobs."

### **Confession :**

" I confess that I have used such, and even more definite and emphatic phrases not alone on the (above-said) two occasions, but in several other speeches as well that I have delivered during the course of the last two years. To speak so is an imperative duty in my belief, and I cannot desist from performing this duty, simply because of the threat that it would be regarded a crime under Section 124-A. I want to repeat it even now, and will go on repeating the same so long as I can talk. And if I do not act so, I shall consider myself to be guilty of the worst crime before both Almighty and his creation."

### **The Present Government Is A Tyrant :**

" Certainly I have said that ' the present Government is a tyrant ', but what else should I say if I should not say this much? I do not understand why they expect me to call a thing by a name other than what it is: I refuse to call black which is white.

The mildest and the shortest words which I could find in this respect were these, and I could think of no other truth that was garbed in a briefer phraseology.

I have certainly been saying in the past that there are only two ways leading to our goal: Either the Government should refrain from doing injustice and depriving us of our rights, or if it cannot do so, it must be wiped out of existence. I do not know what else can be said instead of this, for this is such an ancient truth of human beliefs that the sea or the mountains alone can stand in antiquity to it. A thing which is bad should either mend itself or end itself; there can be no other alternative to it. When I am convinced of the evils of this Government, I can certainly not pray on the one hand, that it should not correct itself, and on the other, that it should live long."

### **Why Do I Possess Such A Belief :**

"Why is it that this has become an article of my faith and that of millions of my countrymen? Its causes and grounds have now become so evident that it may be said in the words of Milton as 'more perceptive and evident than anything else on the earth after the sun'. For perceptions we can say this much at least that you should not deny them point-blank. Still, I would like to say that I hold this belief because, I am an Indian, because I am a Mussalman, and because I am a human being."

### **Autocracy In Itself Is Tyranny :**

"I believe that liberty is the birth-right of every nation and individual. No man, nor

any man-made bureaucracy possesses the right of enslaving human beings. Howsoever attractive we may coin the names for slavery and servitude, still slavery will remain what it is. It is against the will and canons of God. Therefore, I refuse to admit the present Government as a valid authority, and consequently think it to be my national, religious and human duty to relieve my country and nation of this servitude."

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"I am a Mussalman, and as such, my religious duty is the same. Islam does not recognize any autocratic suzerainty, nor any bureaucracy which consists of a few paid servants. It is a perfect organization of liberty and constitutionalism, which originated for the purpose of restoring their lost freedom to humanity,—the freedom which had been confiscated by kings, foreign Government, selfish religious leaders, and powerful elements of the society. They thought that might was right; but Islam proclaimed from its very birth that might was not right, and right alone was proprietorship; and no one else than God was worthy of enslaving or enthralling the human beings. It (Islam) swept off all racial and national gradations of distinction and authority, and showed the world at large that all human beings hold an equal rank, and all possess equal rights. Superiority does not lie in race, nationality



or colour ; it is only actions that count, and the greatest man is he who does his work best."

### **Islam Is A Republican Organization :**

" This is the proclamation of human rights that was issued eleven hundred years before the French Revolution. It was not a mere pronouncement, but a practical organization which in the words of the historian Gibbon, ' has got no match '. The Government of the Prophet and his descendants was based upon perfect Republican principles, and its constitution was formed only on a national franchise, nominations and elections. That is why there exist so coherent and appropriate words in the Islamic terminology which one can hardly find in any other language of the world. Islam does not recognize the authority or identity of the ' King ' as such, and accepts only the post of a President of the Republic, but even for that the designation of ' Khalifa ' is suggested, which literally means a ' Deputy ' and shows that his authority is only that of a Viceregent who possesses no wide powers. Similarly, the Quran has suggested the word *Shura* for the constitutional system in the following manner :

' And we ordered the *Shura* from amongst them.'

" There is a full Chapter having this title in the Quran. ' *Shura* ' means a joint discussion,

*i.e.*, whatever work is required to be done, it should be executed with the joint advice and discussion of all, without taking any individual opinions into consideration. What else can there be a more correct name for a Republican Government ? ”

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### **Is it Justice if not Tyranny ?**

“In short, my own declaration in this respect is quite clear and evident. The present Government is simply an illicit bureaucracy. It is absolutely nil for the desires and wishes of the teeming millions. It always prefers prestige over justice and truth. It maintains the legality of the heinous massacre of the Jallianwalla Bagh at Amritsar. It admits of no injustice in its order to human beings to creep on their bellies like beasts. It allows whipping of innocent boys till they fall unconscious, simply because they would not salute the Union Jack like a puppet. It does not desist from crushing down the Islamic Caliphate in spite of the persistent petitions of thirty crores of men. It considers no harm in breaking all its promises. It hands over Symerna and Thrace in a clear unjust manner to the Greeks, and thereafter watches the show of the massacre and loot of the entire Islamic population.

“ Its courage is indefatigable and its bravery

is unlimited in crushing the sense of justice; and there is no restraint to its tongue when falsifying the sense of truth. Eighty per cent of the population in Symerna is Muslim, but the Prime Minister declares unabashed about the majority of the Christian population. The Greek Government is throwing Islamic population in a flood of fire and blood, but it (the British Government) fearlessly continues telling the imaginary tales of the Turkish cruelty, and keeps in secret the reports of the American Commission which was sent up there by the British themselves.

“ But neither it admits these cruelties and crimes nor it desists from them; and on the contrary force and violence of every sort is introduced to annihilate the valid and peaceful efforts of the country; and everything which has been done during the last one year and which is now being done since November 18, takes place in toto. Therefore, if I should not call such a Government as *Tyrant* and the one which must *either mend or end*, then the one which should I call it as *Just* and *shouldn't mend and shouldn't end*?

“ For the simple reason that the tyrant is powerful and possesses prison-houses, does it give him a right that his name should be changed? I would say in the words of Italy's admirable lover of freedom—Joseph Massini that *‘we cannot ignore your defects simply*

because of the fact that you hold a temporary power".

### Unlimited Commission of Crimes :

"With great surprise I ask: Why these two incomplete and insufficient speeches of mine have been presented in evidence against me? Does it mean that this was the only stuff which the Government could procure out of those numerous speeches whose echoes had resounded in every nook and corner of India? I confess that during the last two years, I never gave a speech in which I did not explain all these facts which are mentioned in the above-said two speeches.

"For the last twelve years I have been constantly giving the lesson of the demand of rights and claim of liberty to my country and people. I was eighteen years of age when I first started writing and speaking on this subject. I have sacrificed the best part of my life, I mean my youth, in the love of this ideal alone. For four years I suffered internment, but even there I devoted my days and nights in teaching and training others on the same lines. The very doors and walls of Ranchi, where I spent my days of internment, bear testimony to this effect. This is the perpetual aim of my life, and for this alone I live. Says the Quran: *'My prayers, actions, life and death are all for the sake of God Almighty.'*

## Non-Violent Non-Co-operation :

"In this war for liberty and equity, I have adopted the path of non-violent non-co-operation. Opposed to us stands a power, fully equipped with all the cruel weapons of tyranny and violence, but we trust alone in God and our indefatigable sacrifice and unflinching stability. Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, I do not believe that violence should not, under any circumstances, be met with violence. I perfectly believe that the circumstances under which Islam has permitted the use of violence are in accordance with both the laws of nature and justice or equity. But at the same time, I fully agree with the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi in the case of India's freedom and our present struggle; and I have complete confidence in their truth. I am, therefore, certain that India will achieve a victory through non-violent efforts, and her success will be a lasting example of the triumph of moral and spiritual forces.

"This is the reason why I have always advised the public to do a peaceful agitation, and have called it the first step towards success. Even these speeches, as is proved from the copies presented in the court, bear the same ideas. I am from amongst those few Mussalmans who can say with confidence that if they had not kept the Mussalmans (of India) with a strong hand upon the path of non-violent agitation,

no one knows what terrible shape their patience-sapping excitement, due to the Khilafat question, would have taken. At least, the scenes of the Malabar occurrence would have been repeated in every part of India."

### **The Present State of Affairs is Natural:**

"What I have already stated in the beginning, I will repeat it in my conclusion: What the Government is doing with us today is nothing extraordinary for which it should be specially reprimanded. Malevolence, oppression and tyranny is, but the second nature of all the ruling nations at the moment of a national awakening in the country, and we must not expect that human nature will change for our sake alone.

"This natural weakness exists equally amongst individuals and masses. How many people are there in this world who would return a thing coming to them for the simple reason that they have no right over it? Then why should such a hope be cherished for the entire Continent (of India)? Authority never accepts an argument merely because it is reasonable and perspicuous. It by itself expects the birth of another power on whose appearance it yields even to the most unreasonable demands. Thus, struggle and suspense is unavoidable, and is such a natural thing that it should take

place without any worry or wonder like other ordinary affairs of the world.

“I also admit that, compared to the dreadful scenes which the history has shown us regarding human oppressions and tyranny, the present violence and cruelty can in no way be called greater ; but I cannot say whether this leniency is for the reason that the country as yet shows any imperfect emotions of sacrifice or that the power of tyranny is not perfect in itself ? Future will make it clear.”

### Sedition :

“I have been charged with sedition, but tell me the meanings of ‘*Sedition*’. Does it mean a struggle for freedom which has not proved a success as yet? If that is so, I confess my guilt ; but along with that I also remind you that the same action gets the honourable name of ‘*patriotism*’ when the struggle proves a success. Until yesterday the armed leaders of Ireland were regarded as rebels, but what title does Great Britain suggest today for De Valera and Griffith ?

“The same Ireland’s Parnell had said once : ‘Our work has always been considered as ‘*rebellion*’ in the beginning and ‘*crusade for patriotism*’ in the end.”

“Consequently, the judgment of what is happening today will be delivered ‘*To-morrow*’. Injustice would be wiped out and justice alone will live behind. We beleive in the (*Divine*) decision of *To-morrow*.

“But this is quite natural that one should expect rain when there are clouds on the sky. We now find that the weather shows all signs of a change, but woe betide the eyes that refuse to see these signs!

“In the same speeches which have been filed against me in evidence, I had said: ‘The seed of liberty can never thrive unless it is watered with tyranny and oppression.’

“But the Government has started such irrigation!

“I had also said therein: ‘why do you feel sorry on the arrests of the Khilafat propagandists? If you earnestly seek liberty and justice, get ready for going to jail, and let the Alipore Jail be crowded to such an extent that there remains no room for thieves in it!’”

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“Before I end the statement . . . I would like to say something about the Magistrate as well. Let him award, without any hesitation, the maximum punishment which he is authorized to give. I will not have any feeling



of grudge or complaint against him, because my contest is against the entire administrative machinery and not with a specified part thereof. I, therefore, know that unless the whole machine is changed, its parts cannot change their respective functions.

“I close my account with the words of Italy’s martyr for truth—Gardino Brono, who like me, was also made to stand before a law-court, and who declared: ‘Give me, without any hesitation, the maximum punishment that you can give, and I assure you that whatever emotions you will have in your heart at the moment of writing the punishment orders, not a hundredth part thereof shall work in my heart while hearing the judgment.’”

### Conclusion :

“ Mr. Magistrate !

“I shall not take any more time of the court. It is a very interesting and instructive chapter of history which we both are equally busy in preparing. While I get the criminals’ dock, to you comes the magisterial seat; but I admit that for this work your seat is as much important as this dock. Come then, let us finish quickly this memorable act which is soon to become a fable. The historian is watching us and waiting anxiously. Allow me to occupy this place repeatedly and you may

also go on writing your judgments with equal agility. This work will continue for some time more, and then the gates of *another* Court will open wide. That will be the Court of the Lord where Time will act as the Judge; it will pass the judgment and that will be the final Judgment : ”

‘And praise be to God in the beginning and in the end.’

This great Statement was delivered by the Maulana on January 11, 1922. On February 9, the Chief Presidency Magistrate in his judgment stated that the Maulana had, through his speeches, tried to spread a feeling of ill-will and hatred against the established laws of the Government; and therefore, finding him guilty, he awarded him one year’s rigorous imprisonment.

“ *Only one year’s rigorous imprisonment ?* ” asked the Maulana in amazement. “ But this is far too less than what I was expecting ! ”

#### IV

The annual Session of the Congress was held at Ahmedabad in December 1921 under the Presidentship of Hakim Ajmal Khan. The Khilafat Committee and the Muslim League also held their respective Sessions at the same place. It was here that the Congress approved

of the General Civil Disobedience Movement giving Gandhi the sole Dictatorial powers. It was resolved :

“Whereas since the holding of the last National Congress, the people of India have found, from actual experience, that by reason of the adoption of non-violent non-co-operation, the country has made great advance in fearlessness, self-sacrifice and self-respect, and whereas the country on the whole is rapidly progressing towards Swaraj, this Congress confirms the resolution adopted at the special Session of the Congress at Calcutta and reaffirmed at Nagpur and places on record the fixed determination of the Congress to continue the programme of Non-violent Non-co-operation with greater vigour than hitherto in such manner as each province may determine till the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs are redressed and Swaraj is established and the control of the Government of India passes into the hands of the people from that of an irresponsible corporation.

“In view of the impending arrests of a large number of Congress workers, this Congress whilst requiring the ordinary machinery to remain intact and to be utilised in the ordinary manner whenever feasible, hereby appoints, until further instructions, Mahatma Gandhi as the sole executive authority of the Congress

and invests him with the full power to convene a special Session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee, such powers to be exercised between any two Sessions of the All-India Congress Committee and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.

“This Congress hereby confers upon the said successor and all subsequent successors appointed in turn by their predecessors his aforesaid powers.

“Provided that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to authorise Mahatma Gandhi or any of the aforesaid successors to conclude any terms of peace with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Committee to be finally ratified by the Congress specially convened for the purpose” . . .

This was followed by an orgy of arrests and convictions throughout the country. All prominent workers and leaders were imprisoned and volunteers by the thousand went to jails with a frantic zeal and unprecedented enthusiasm.

And then suddenly came the *'quake-shock !*

## CHAPTER °VIII

### The 'Quake Shock

The Congress, by passing the Ahmedabad Resolution, completely identified itself with Gandhi's programme, and 'embarked upon a policy of mass action which was beyond the most extravagant dreams of its original founders'. During the months of December 1921 and January 1922 alone, no less than 30,000 people were imprisoned in connection with the Non-Co-operation Movement. Then suddenly Gandhi, who had not so far been touched by the Government, suspended the Civil Disobedience Movement.

"Inconsistency," said Tagore once, "is the strongest and the weakest point in the character of Mahatma Gandhi.' It was certainly this trait of his character that led to the primary success and the ultimate failure of the Non-Co-operation Movement.

"If any movement in the history of the world could be called as one man's movement," says the author of *Non-Violent Non-Co-operation*, "it was certainly the Non-Co-operation

Movement. Not only its conception and genesis, but also its life and growth, had all their origin in Mahatmaji's head and heart. He alone was the guide and the operator; all others were followers and tools. The success which the Movement achieved in its first stages, obliging even a clever politician like Lord Reading to climb down from his high pedestal and beg Mahatmaji for a Round Table Conference, was solely due to the spirit of enthusiasm, born of optimism, which Mahatmaji had introduced into Indian politics . . . One could not raise a whole nation to the great heights of perfect non-violence in one year, specially when the people regarded the doctrine as something new and when they had adopted it not as a temporary expedient. Indians as a nation, brought and bred from the very dawn of their history in an atmosphere of political violence, could not be, and should not have been expected to become non-violent in thought, word and deed in the short span of one year. Buddha had failed in this direction, Christ had failed, and so did Mahatma Gandhi."

The sudden cause of the stoppage of the Civil Disobedience Movement was said to be the Chauri Chaura incident. A mob of rioters had killed and burnt twenty-one policemen and guards at a police-station near the village of Chauri Chaura. By passing restrictive orders after this incident Gandhi amazed all his friends

and foes. Perhaps he wanted his countrymen to become saints before endeavouring for the Swaraj. Perhaps he wanted them to give up the idea of independence as long as they were not perfectly non-violent. Perhaps it was the Dictatorial whip which he tried to use for training the nation in the way of starting and stopping at his commands, for certainly he was armed with the unfailing atomic energy of *Ahimsa*, which he and he alone could use.

The halt order of Gandhi after the Chauri Chaura incident was considered as one of the greatest political blunders. Says Jawaharlal Nehru: "The sudden suspension of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented, I think, by almost all the prominent Congress leaders—other than Gandhi of course. My father (who was in goal at the time) was much upset by it. The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground and this mental reaction was to be expected. . . . Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent movement; but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the-way place going to put an end, for some time at least, to our national struggle for freedom? If this was the inevitable consequence of a sporadic act of violence, than surely there was something lacking in the philo-

## THE 'QUAKE SHOCK

sophy and technique of a non-violent struggle for freedom. For it seemed to us to be impossible to guarantee against the occurrence of some such untoward incident. Must we train the three hundred and odd millions of India in the theory and practice of non-violent action before we could go forward? And, even so, how many of us could say that under extreme provocation from the police we would be able to remain perfectly peaceful? But even if we succeeded, what of numerous *agents provocateurs*, stool pigeons, and the like who crept into our movement and indulged in violence themselves or induced others to do so? If this was the sole condition of its function, then the non-violent method of resistance would always fail."

If by calling off Civil Disobedience Gandhi meant to clear the country of violent tendencies, it was nothing beyond a chimeric hope, for his opponents would always have created a situation wherein there would have been no other course open but to abandon the fight. It was no excuse. Naturally there was a great reaction, fury and resentment.

All prominent leaders were in prison and the masses in spite of the enthusiasm, could not think of any headway at such an abrupt end of their activities. The results were apparent. The Non-Co-operation Movement cooled down and all organised discipline went to pieces.



Since Gandhi himself had quietened his ranks, the Government was wise enough to avail of this opportunity. On March 1, 1922, Gandhi was arrested and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. Thus, quietly the huge edifice of the Non-Violent struggle, which Gandhi had so ingeniously designed, planned and erected upon the shoulders of his countrymen, collapsed.

While Gandhi was in prison, his lieutenants got a chance of examining his scheme of work more critically, and ultimately dividing into two hostile camps—the 'No-Changers' and the Swarajists.' While the former group represented by Rajagopalachari, Dr. Ansari, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel professed their unflinching faith in Gandhi and his programme of boycott, the latter represented by Pandit Motilal Nehru, Lalā Lajpat Rai, C.R. Das and Subhas Bose strongly opposed the non-violent way of the struggle. They were the advocates of reform by parliamentary tactics, and attainment of Swaraj by capturing the legislatures and destroying the structure of dyarchy by worming into its very system.

In December 1922, C. R. Das was elected as President of the Congress Session at Gaya. Das was a lawyer, an orator and a poet whose actions bespoke his poetic emotions. The Session opened with a very tense tug-of-war

between the No-Changers and Swarajists. While Das loved business, economy, order and quick action for freeing the country off its shackles, the No-Changers worked the Gandhian way of extreme slowness and did not try to modify it. It was, therefore, decided at this Session that the Swaraj Party should go ahead. While business accumulated as usual on the Presidential desk, Pandit Motilal Nehru got up and announced the purpose and programme of the Swaraj Party. It was to wreck the Constitution from within unless its demands for a better constitution were granted. The proposal was confirmed by the President.

Thus came the split within the Congress. Bitter feelings arose between the No-Changers and the Swarajist's all over the country and in some provinces rival Congress Committees were set up, each claiming its validity.

The controversy between the two groups became a cause of bitter resentment and exasperation, and it was feared that such an unfortunate rivalry might prove the cause of the downfall of the Congress prestige and honour. Again, in such a tense situation a new organisation—the Hindu Mahasabha came into existence. Its aim was 'the maintenance, protection and promotion of the Hindu race, Hindu culture and Hindu civilisation, and the advancement of the glory of the Hindu

*rashttra* and with a view to secure them the attainment of *Purna Swaraj*.'

The Hindu Mahasabha was against the nationalistic policy of the Congress party. It aimed at the *Rama Rajya* (Hindu Renaissance) pure and simple. It had got nothing to do with members of other religions in the country. It thus sowed the seeds of communalism which has since then become such a spiky and baffling affair in India.

Abul Kalam Azad was released from prison when such a situation was rife in the political arena of India, with the Congress split up into two warring houses. The nation showed an utter lack of political harmony for which he had thought, the Congress had successfully prepared a good ground. He, therefore, considered it his duty to do his best to reconcile the two opposing parties. He issued a statement in which he declared: 'No political programme could be held as sacrosanct. It had to be judged on its own merits.'

Although the Maulana was a staunch follower of Gandhi; yet he was correct in considering that the Mahatma's ideal of Non-Cooperation or Non-Violence could be of no practical value in the face of a division among the ranks of the Congress. It was, therefore, very important to find out some sort of co-ordination of activity if not unity between the

two groups without identifying himself with either.

## II

Abul Kalam Azad set himself to work with his proverbial efficiency, thrift and honesty. He enjoyed the confidence of both the sides and with his cordial, humorous and friendly manner consulted people of all ranks and degrees over the country. One of the serious obstacles that he had to find in his way was the *Jamiat-ul-Ulama*, which had pledged to the Non-Co-operation Movement from its very outset by issuing a *Fatwa* or religious injunction declaring co-operation with an alien Government to be sinful from the Islamic view-point. But there was no way back for them when Gandhi suddenly changed his mind and ordered the suspension of the Non-Co-operation Movement. Political actions based upon religious injunctions cannot be worked like a machine to be started or stopped when desired by the click of the button. The Ulama would have made a joke of the Maulana if he had urged them to suspend the Movement in accordance with the behests of the Congress Dictator.

It was here that the cause of difference lay between the Muslims and the Hindus. It was here that the germs of the 'Divide and Rule' policy which had since long received

a set-back, seemed once again active. Says Mahadeo Desai: "Something had conspired to root out from the mass-mind that spirit of brotherliness that seemed to have been fostered during 1919-22. The superficial faith in non-violence was extinguished and no solution seemed to appeal to them save a resort to force . . . Religious fanatics in each community attacked the other's religion and sought to add to its fold men and women from the other community without the slightest regard to the means employed. The Mussalmans proclaimed their right to carry on *tabligh*; the Hindus replied by proclaiming their right to *shuddhi*. These attempts at conversions brought conflict after conflict in their train."

In January 1924, Gandhi was released from prison. He found the entire country blazing with the fire of communal conflicts. Serious riots were reported to have occurred at Multan, Ajmer, Sambhal, Palwal, Sharanpur, Amethi and Kohat.

This was the natural result of stemming the tide of the mass awakening through Gandhi's propaganda. He said: "The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again."

With the house divided into two hostile camps, and with the people breaking one

another's heads, the leaders had to face a very serious situation. At Delhi a special Session of the Congress was held under the Presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad.

It was a sky-high job for a young man of thirty-five. He certainly did not seek the responsibility, and little did he dream of the tremendous fame that it would bring him in the following days. Being the youngest President in the annals of the Congress, Azad, though not very heroic looking, was already one of the most deeply read and original thinkers in the country. But the responsibilities he had to shoulder were of so great a magnitude that it was considered really a wizard's work to prove a match for them.

The struggle between the Swarajists and the No-Changeers had reached its climax and it was of immediate importance to find out some means of making a compromise between them. The Session, thus, opened in a tense atmosphere.

A sound, all quiet !

A tall, dignified, strikingly handsome person got upon the dais and took the Presidential chair. The eyes that could see in the dark, that could see through the walls of the Presidency Jail, fell upon the huge gathering in the *Pandal*. There was present that friendly gentleman with a fine, rather foreign-looking

beard, eyes like 'two strips of sea—level and deep, strong and fresh'—Maulana Mohammad Ali. There was present that great figure with the stomach full of new meats, and the brain full of fresh ideas—Shaukat Ali. There was present that tall man with long white hands and a round cleanshaven face under a silvered head—Pandit Motilal Nehru with his kindly compressed lips. And there was present the man wrinkling a thin, parchmentry face, full of suffering and kindly cynicism—C. R. Das, who alone had spent thirty-six thousand rupees and borne all the expenses of the delegates from Bengal in order to win the Swarajists' cause.

The Maulana's action saved the Congress from remaining a divided house and disintegrating itself. He threw open all its doors and knocked off all its shackles. He knew that the Swarajists could do no special good to the country by entering into the Councils. "If anybody's conscience was elastic enough," said the Maulana, "and he could gulp down the oath of allegiance without compunction, he was welcome to go to the legislative bodies and curse the Government to his heart's content for its wrongs to the people. Those who desired to spend their impotent rage on the Government from the safe and comfortable seats in the legislative chambers, had every right to do so. Those who believed in the

efficacy of moral pressure and who, for some reason or other, were not prepared to work outside the legislatures, had nothing else to do but let off gas now and then in that safe atmosphere."

Thus, with an uncommon political sense the Maulana presented a formula upon which the Working Committee agreed and accordingly passed a resolution to the effect that all propaganda against entering the Councils was to be suspended and those of the Congressmen who had no objection against entering the Legislatures were at liberty to seek elections and non-co-operate with the Government from within ; while those who did not believe in such a programme were to redouble their efforts to carry out the constructive programme of Gandhi to achieve Swaraj by united efforts.

That ended rival ideologies in a beautiful way. The Maulana's youthful impression and animated action left an ineffable impression upon the minds of all.

But, as expected, the Council-entry programme did not carry the Congress very far. Says Desai: "The Council programme was quite successful so far as fire works went ; there were magnificent speeches, Government sustained defeat upon defeat, but all these made us no stronger. And as years went by, demoralization crept into the ranks, and Pandit



Motilal Nehru had often to take drastic disciplinary action."

The next serious problem before the Maulana was the settling of the communal imbroglios in 1923-24. Even Gandhi was exasperated at the horrible situation and no other remedy but to fast and pray was left before him. In September 1924 he declared at Delhi: "I must do penance. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruths, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God."

The news of Gandhi's fast spread instantaneously over the length and breadth of the country. (A Unity Conference was proposed at Delhi where about one hundred and fifty Hindu and Muslim leaders met and discussed for about a week. Abul Kalam was the foremost among those who laboured the clock around and endeavoured to the utmost to bring the two communities together.) His talks were more definite, more coherent, and more clearly deduced from unquestionable principles of knowledge. He made it clear that the social order of India was based upon the maintenance of the Hindu-Muslim unity, and the great cause which divided them was not to be decided by individual animosities;

but on the contrary the shortest and surest way of making both the communities happy was to contribute by neighbourly intercourse and attention to make one another happy.

The problem that greatly vexed the Hindus was that of the cow-sacrifice which the Muslims used to do. They did not like the idea of their killing the cows by taking out a procession of the beasts, by killing them at places which were not meant for the purpose, and by having little regard of their religious sentiments. Since the Maulana enjoyed confidence of both the Hindus and Muslims, he 'in the pathos and fervour of his eloquence and the generosity of his sentiment, prompted (as he himself pointed out) by the special circumstances of India consistently with the strict observance of the practice of his own faith. He asked his co-religionists to remember that cow-slaughter ever for purposes of sacrifice was not a fundamental part of their religion, and he assured his Hindu friends that there was not a few Mussalman leaders who had not only never tasted beef themselves, but were endeavouring to reduce the use of it among Mussalmans, if only to show their spirit of brotherliness with the Hindus.' He stressed that it was the foreseeable time for them to relax the taboos which kept the two communities apart. The Maulana's appeal touched the hearts of both Mussalmans and Hindus, and

they realised that 'the solution of the trouble lay in each being ready to fulfil one's obligations rather than to assert one's rights.' The Muslim leaders including Abul Kalam Azad, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari went to see Gandhi on the termination of his twenty-one days' fast undertaken for the cause of the Hindu-Muslim unity, and Gandhi told them: "I do not know what is the will of God ; but on this day I would beseech you to promise to lay down your lives, if necessary, for the cause (of the Hindu-Muslim unity)."

Abul Kalam still stands firm upon this pledge of unity, but neither Gandhi's penance nor Abul Kalam's prayers could remove the differences. A few weeks after the Conference fierce communal clashes occurred at Allahabad and Jubbulpore, and thereafter at several other places. More Unity Conferences were arranged, more discussions took place and more resolutions were passed, but matters went on getting from bad to worse.

In 1925 Mohammad Ali Jinnah was elected President of the Muslim League. He was then a staunch supporter of Gandhi's idea of an honourable alliance of the two communities. Therefore, in his Presidential address, he greatly stressed upon the Hindu-Muslim unity and called it as the only way for attaining Swaraj.

## III

Mohammad Ali Jinnah worked in collaboration with the Congress to bring about a real Hindu-Muslim unity. Another Unity Conference was called at Delhi under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ansari. The atmosphere of the country was still much disturbed by serious riots over the question of sacrifice of cows by the Mussalmans, and playing of music by the Hindus before the mosques. Besides the *shuddhi* and *tabligh* movements were playing no mean part in creating suspicion, prejudice and enmity between the two communities.

The Congress, it was said, was passing mere paper resolutions on the Hindu-Muslim unity and did not take any serious steps to bring about the desired results. Further, the Mahasabha excited the Hindus against Mussalmans by openly declaring that 'not only the British, but the Muslims also be sent out of this country, bag and baggage' as the latter were trying to establish Muslim Raj once again by getting the military aid of Muslim countries abroad. The Muslims League, therefore, took up the cause of the Mussalmans and defined the position of the Muslim population in India. —

Mohammad Ali Jinnah attended all meetings of the Congress and endeavoured to make its programme successful, but extremists

amongst the Mussalmans themselves could not bear the attitude of the members of the Congress showing distinct leanings towards the Mahasabha at that time. Still they did not wish to snap off their relations with the Congress and constantly worked for the Hindu-Muslim unity at the moment when a new constitution was being framed for India by the British Parliament. And since it was also considering about the nature of political reforms to be introduced in the country, it was imperative that the two chief communities should unite at least over their political problems for the consequent mutual benefit, and their own differences may not be taken as an excuse for the issue of reforms by the Government.

For this purpose an All-Parties Conference was held at Simla in September, 1927, where leaders met to arrive at a Hindu-Muslim agreement at all costs. Jinnah was the Chairman of the main Committee, but here again in spite of strenuous efforts, the meeting ended without any tangible results.

Once again the flames of communal clashes began to rise high. News came of serious disturbances in Barisal, Mymen Singh and other districts of Bengal. Even in Calcutta there were clashes between the Hindus and Muslims over the question of music and cows. [A few days after these incidents the local Khilafat Committee arranged for a Unity

Talk by Abul Kalam Azad in the Baliday Park at Calcutta. The enemies of the Congress, who were the willing tools of the policy of 'Divide and Rule' tried to make the best use of the weakness of masses. They conspired to root out the spirit of fraternity from amongst them. They instigated a large number of men against the Maulana and sent them armed with batons, sticks and *lathis* to the place of meeting that evening.

The Maulana arrived on the spot which looked more of a battle-field than a place of meeting. Some of his followers fearing trouble requested the Maulana to return immediately to his residence; but he replied that if he had known of the situation before hand, he would not have cared to come, but since he had already come to the place he would not go back without making a speech.

Abul Kalam stood up for the speech.

The park was overflowed with people of all ages and types; from him who looked like a peasant of Hoogly—brown, broad and strong, to the weariest black consumptive man of the Kiddarpore docks; from old men of seventies with shaggy hair to young striplings in teens; from the unhinged *mahants* and *mullas* to the crack-brained *goondas* and *badmashes*, some whispering, some coughing, some thumping and some winking at one another as if waiting

for the signal to jump upon the speaker like hungry wolves. The Maulana's attitude in such critical circumstances reveals his true character to some extent.

There he stood facing a seething mob of rioters. His first words were hardly heard by any one, but gradually his voice began to rise higher and higher. He addressed the maddened crowd, calmly, clearly and reasonably. His voice rang over the tumult calling upon the mob to listen to what he was saying. For two hours he showered his simple and plain words from the platform, and the agitators who had come sufficiently armed to hammer the Maulana down were waving themselves in sheer ecstasy with faces covered with tears. It was a simple miracle of the Maulana.

In November 1927, Lord Irwin, the then Viceroy, made an announcement about the appointment of the Statutory Commission on Reforms under the leadership of Sir John Simon. Its object was to elicit Indian opinion and present its proposals to Parliament, which would afterwards be referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee to see up to what extent it was desirable to establish the principles of responsible Government in the country.

The announcement of the Simon Commission was a sudden cause of awakening among the Indians. As the Commission consisted

only of a few members of the British Parliament and had no Indian member amongst them, the public took that it was an insult to the Indian intelligencia. Almost everywhere voices rose high against the coming of the Commission and a programme for its complete boycott was launched by the Congress. At the Annual Session of the Congress held at Madras in that year, Dr. Ansari stressed that 'the problem of the Hindu-Muslim differences must be solved once and for all' and as a result of his efforts, the two main resolutions passed by the Unity Conference at Delhi were adopted by the Congress Committee.

The Congress also decided to 'organize public opinion by vigorous propaganda so as to persuade all shades of public opinion effectively to boycott the Commission.' (The Maulana played a very important role in the boycott propaganda making a tour of the Punjab and organising complete *hartals* everywhere in the province at the time of the arrival of the Commission. During these observances there were brutal *lathi* charges at Lahore where Lala Lajpat Rai was fatally assaulted.) This increased the fervour of the demonstrators against the Commission. At Lucknow Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant were attacked and wounded by the police among other volunteers. This created greater resentment and more irritation against the Government.



The Council-party of the Congress, under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru was equally exasperated of the attitude of the Central Government. At the Calcutta Session of the Congress, Pandit Motilal had given a year's ultimatum to the Government for the offer of the Dominion Status to India, failing which the Congress were to launch its fight for the complete independence. As the year was at the fag-end, the Congress resolved to call upon its members to resign from the Central Assembly; but Lord Irwin made an announcement for a meeting of Indian leaders to consider of the opportunity when the Dominion Status was to be established in India. This was just an eye-wash and the Congress refused to co-operate with him unless there were any signs of a real change of hearts. Meanwhile the agitation was again gaining strength all over the country. Days passed in quick succession. The Viceroy made a final attempt to find out some basis of agreement. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Gandhi were invited for a close discussion with him, but the Government seemed to be poles apart from the Congress view-point. The interview came to nothing once again and the only way now left before the Congress was to go ahead with its struggle for the complete independence.

In December, 1929 Pandit Jawaharlal

Nehru presided over the annual Session of the Congress at Lahore. At this historic meeting the memorable resolution for the complete independence of India was passed, and immediately after that event all Congress members of the Provincial and Central Legislatures were called upon to resign from their seats.

January 26 was announced as the Independence Day to begin the fight for freedom.

## CHAPTER IX

### **The Gulf Widens**

A Nationalist Muslim Party was formed within Indian National Congress in the year 1929. Its President was Abul Kalam Azad, with T. A. Sherwani and Dr. Ansari as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The aim of this organization was to present a united front against various Muslim organizations like the Muslim League, the Ahrars, the Khudai Khidmatgars and the like, to create a spirit of patriotism amongst the Muslims so that they may take an active part in the political struggle of the country after sinking down their communal differences, and to form such relations between the minority and majority communities which may put an end to all differences amongst them for their individual claims.

The Organization worked within the Congress and endeavoured to solve the Hindu-Muslim tangle by proposing some particular methods of propaganda ; but while the Congress was preparing itself for the coming struggle for the complete independence, Abul Kalam Azad found that the Muslims were drifting

away from the proposed action. There was a division, not only amongst the Muslim masses, but also among their leaders. The Ali Brothers had attended the Lahore Session of the Congress, but warned Gandhi that the Muslims were not willing to come forward for any further civil disobedience campaign. Dr. Ansari's attitude too was lukewarm, but Abul Kalam had no misgivings about the support of Muslims in the coming struggle and urged the Congress to go on steadily with its programme of the fight for complete independence.

No signs of submission were visible from the side of the Government. The Viceroy had made an announcement to hold a Round Table Conference in England, obviously to smooth things over. Gandhi and Motilal Nehru thought it desirable to see the Viceroy on this issue, but they came back greatly disappointed since the latter was not prepared to commit himself to Dominion Status. Therefore, finding no hope of an Indian and British union, the Congress finally decided to take no part in the proposed Conference and appealed the nation to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress.

The Independence Day was celebrated all over India on the 26th January, 1930. But "it was easier to declare independence than to make it a reality. For two months the Congress remained fishing in uncertain waters and

knew not what to do" for Gandhi wanted to adopt some non-violent method of action. "The great question" says Jawaharlal Nehru, "that hung in the air now, was—how? What form of civil disobedience should we take up that would be effective, suited to the circumstances and popular with the masses?"

On March 2, 1930, Gandhi gave out that the Salt Tax was to be attacked, and the Salt Laws were to be broken. On the same day he addressed a letter to the Viceroy telling him that "on the 11th day of this month, I shall proceed with such co-workers of the *Ashram* as I can take, to disregard the provisions of the Salt Laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's stand-point. As the Independence Movement is essentially for the poorest in the land the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope that there will be tens of thousands ready in a disciplined manner, to take up the work after me and, in the act of disobeying the Salt Act, to lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the Statute Book."

People were bewildered at the new move of Gandhi. They could not fit in the struggle for complete independence with common salt.

They took some time to understand that by breaking the Salt Laws Gandhi's aim was neither to organize a cheap supply of salt nor to break the salt monopoly of the Government, and he only wanted to show the people 'how they should treat the unjust laws to which Indians were subjected under the existing alien administration'.

Gandhi's historic march to the Dandi sea-beach to break the Salt Laws became a topic of interest all over the world. Salt manufacture became a craze throughout the country. *Hartals*, processions, *lathi* charges, firings and arrests became common.

On May 5, Gandhi was arrested and the Working Committee of the Congress finding that the breach of Salt Laws alone would not serve any purpose, passed a resolution aiming at a complete boycott of the British goods, a strict social boycott of all Government officials, introduction of no-tax campaign, and condemnation of the Press ordinances by strict non-violent means.

Civil Disobedience Movement thus came into full swing.

↓  
The hold of Abul Kalam upon the Muslim masses now became manifest. All over the country Muslims responded to his call with an abounding enthusiasm and every one marvelled at the amazing hold of the Maulana.

In the Muslim majority provinces like Bengal, the Punjab and the North-Western Frontier the movement spread like wild-fire ; the Pathans of the Frontier set an unique example of their discipline and peaceful courage before the machine-gun fire. About sixty thousand men, women and children were put into prison and about four hundred were reported to have been killed during the course of these disturbances.

Abul Kalam was piloting the ship of the Congress when the Civil Disobedience Movement was at its height. He made an extensive tour of the Muslim majority provinces organizing exemplary non-violence in the teeth of brutal violence and urging the rich and poor, men and women all to join their struggle. The part played by women in this mass-movement was something unheard of before, and calling for wonder and amazement. It was their example that evoked enthusiasm amongst men.

Abul Kalam became the Acting President of the Congress after the arrests of Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru during the struggle. In August 1930 he addressed a meeting with profound religious sentiments knowing how strong over the people was the hold of religion and how easy it was to quicken them for action by giving a religious touch to a purely political manifestation. He made picketting a crusade. In the same month he was arrested under the

Picketing Ordinance at Calcutta and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

The conflict between the Congress and the Government took a serious turn when the extremists and terrorists in Bengal and the Punjab took to the bomb and revolver picking out Government officials for assassination, loot and arson. Lord Irwin, though unable to concede to the Congress demands took the opportunity of negotiating with Gandhi through Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and M. R. Jayakar. The members of the Working Committee were all set free to consider the terms of the settlement and prepare a way for peace.

The Gandhi-Irwin talks prolonged over several days and at every moment it was feared that the break might come as usual. The members, therefore, conferred together about their future plans regarding Civil Disobedience. But on the 4th March Gandhi returned from the Viceroy's House with the news of a definite settlement. The Civil Disobedience Movement was withdrawn and the principle of federation with responsibility in the Central Government was accepted by the Congress, but the vital question of Independence remained untouched.

Such was the end of the fight for Independence taken up by Gandhi after the pledge of January 26, 1930.



## II

[The Gandhi-Irwin talks, the call for the the Second Round Table Conference and the participation of Gandhi as the sole representative of the Congress amounted to nothing.] 'It was constituted so as to fail, and the people of India could hardly be made responsible for its failing.' The most noticeable defect was the inability of various communal representatives to settle the terms of political representation among themselves. While Gandhi claimed to be the spokesman of a national body representing both the Hindus and the Muslims, Mohammad Ali challenged his statement and the result was that he was obliged to announce: 'It is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce the utter failure on my part to secure an agreed solution of the Communal question through informal conversations among and with the representatives of different groups.'

The inability of the communities to come to an agreement was given as the cause of the failure of the Second Round Table Conference. Gandhi returned empty-handed from England and re-started his Civil Disobedience Movement. At this juncture the Muslims refused to join the Movement since they had seen its futility for a sufficient time in the past.

The gulf of the Hindu-Muslim differences began to widen now. The Hindus and Muslims

could not come to an agreement because, while the Hindus demanded joint electorates with reservation of seats for the minorities, the Maslims urged for separate electorates on communal basis.

Abul Kalam was again at the helm of affairs, but 'the events had burnt the conviction deep on his mind that a solution of the communal problem was impossible unless and until the British Government had withdrawn and left the two communities free to solve the quarrel between themselves.'

But notwithstanding some clash of interest, the Movement was again put in force. Within a week's time of the start Gandhi and Patel were arrested and imprisoned for an indefinite period without any trial. The local Congress Committees were declared unlawful associations. Bengal, Bihar, U.P. and Bombay were the main theatres of activity; but the most important part was played by the North-Western Frontier Province where in proportion to the number of the population, more of the Muslims went to jails than any other community in the country. About a lakh of men and women were arrested all over India, and heavy fines and sentences of imprisonment were imposed to root out the national spirit from the country.

Abul Kalam Azad who was working as the Acting President at this time, was served with

a notice asking him not to take any part in the Civil Disobedience Movement; but it was not a new thing for him to receive such warnings. He, therefore, was arrested at Delhi in defiance of this notice and sent to the jail.

The strong hands of the Government suppressed the Civil Disobedience Movement, which by 1933 reached its lowest ebb. Gandhi started his *Harijan* Movement on release. It was a reply to the 'Communal Award' and by diverting his activities in this way he let his old Civil Disobedience Movement die a natural death. Finally on August 4, 1933, Gandhi set his seal upon its coffin declaring: "I feel that the masses have not received the full message of *Satyagraha* owing to its adulteration in the process of transmission... I give this opinion as the author and initiator of *Satyagraha*. Henceforth, therefore, all who have been impelled to civil resistance for Swaraj under my advice, directly given or indirectly inferred, will desist from civil resistance. I am quite convinced that this is the best course in the interests of India's fight for freedom."

The All-India Congress Committee met to consider the new situation, and after some deliberation resolved to revive the Parliamentary activities by re-entering the legislatures. Thus, the Swaraj Party once again came into prominence. Maulana Azad had been released by this time; both he and Dr. Ansari contributed

to the formation of a Congress Parliamentary Board by satisfying their colleagues that 'it was not only the right but it was the duty of every Congressman, who for some reason or other did not want to or could not take part in civil resistance and who had faith in entry into the legislatures to seek entry and form combinations in order to prosecute the programme.'

### III

Political jealousy and distrust are two main causes of the Hindu-Muslim quarrels. For selfish ends the individuals instigate their respective communities to fall upon one another's heads and all this trouble is created for a few seats in the Assemblies and a few crumbs from the table of the Viceroy. Nothing but jealousy and suspicion works behind these quarrels which are always given such prominent religious touches by both the Hindus and the Mussalmans. )

The activities of the Swaraj Party estranged the Muslim leaders in no small a degree. A further cause of disruption was the revival of the Muslim League in 1934 when Mohammad Ali Jinnah was elected its President. In his very first speech Jinnah asked the Government to give a complete assurance of the safeguards to Muslims in the future constitution of India. Explaining the cause of this change of his

opinion he said: "Many efforts have been made since 1924 till the Round Table Conference to settle the Hindu-Muslim question. At that time there was no pride in me and I used to beg from the Congress. I worked so incessantly to bring about a rapprochement that a newspaper remarked that Mr. Jinnah is never tired of Hindu-Muslim unity. But I received a shock of my life at the meetings of the Round Table Conference. *In the face of danger the Hindu sentiment, the Hindu mind, and the Hindu attitude led me to the conclusion that there was no hope of unity.*"

There was no hope of unity! Jinnah mustered courage to organize the Muslims under a separate banner and make his Muslim League as the sole representative of a hundred million Muslims.

(Abul Kalam's life-long efforts towards the Hindu-Muslim unity received a severe shock. While Azad preached the gospel of the communal harmony, Jinnah proclaimed:) "I want the Mussalmans to ponder over the situation and decide their own fate by having one single definite uniform policy which should be loyally followed throughout India. It was a great mistake when they (*i.e.*, Maulana Azad and his followers) preached unconditional surrender. It is the height of defeatist mentality to throw ourselves on the mercy and good-will of others, and the highest act of perfidy to the Mussal-

man community ; and if that policy is adopted, let me tell you, the community will seal its doom". . . As a remedy, he suggested : " Only one thing can save the Mussalmans and energise them to regain their lost ground. They must first recapture their own souls and stand by their lofty position and principles which form the basis of their great unity and which bind them in one body-politic."<sup>1</sup>

Both Azad and Gandhi were perturbed at the attitude of Jinnah, but they did not take any appreciable steps against his move. Why?

Azad was a calm and quiet worker as he is even today. (He, therefore, did not like the idea of thumping fists and barking orders at a moment when the League was yet caterpillaring upon the floor of Indian politics.) Gandhi, on the other hand, was tired of the wire-pulling activities of a third hand behind the Hindu-Muslim stage and declared : " I have admitted my incompetence. I have admitted that I have been found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady. I do not find that either Hindus or Muslims are ready to accept my cure, and therefore I simply nowadays confine myself to a passing mention of this problem and content myself by saying that some day or other we Hindus and Muslims will have to come together, if we want the deliver-

1. *Some Recent Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah* (Lahore) 1941.

ance of our country. And if it is to be our lot that, before we can come together, we must shed one another's blood, then I say the sooner we do so the better it is for us."

The Muslim League, thus, got a footing.

#### IV

The Report of the Joint Select Committee of the Houses of Parliament, which subsequently formed the basis of the Government of India Act of 1935, was published in October, 1934. It was debated in February 1935; the Congress moved that the scheme must not be accepted, since it gave no real power to the Indian people; but the Muslim League did not reject it in toto. It accepted the Communal Award 'until a substitute was agreed upon by the various communities concerned', but it denounced the plan of an All-India Federation as something fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable for the reason that 'it was devoid of all basic and essential elements, and it would lead them to nothing but bitterness and ill-will, and nothing but wrangles in the so-called Federal Legislature.' The League, however, accepted the latter part of the Act which dealt with the Provincial Autonomy, and the amendments proposed to the official resolution by Jinnah, as the representative of the League, were adopted.

The rejection of the Federation part of the Act of 1935 was a great achievement of Jinnah and the Muslim League, because without that there could have been no demand for Pakistan in the coming years. His fears against Federation were well-founded, for he knew that 'once saddled in the Centre, the Hindu will be in a commanding position to muzzle the four or five Muslim provinces into complete subordination.'<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the Mahasabha, led by some of the prominent members of the Congress like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and C. Y. Chintamani organized an Anti-Communal Award Organization and began to condemn vehemently the separate representation in legislatures. Unfortunately their mode of presentation of their case was so slashing that it excited the Hindus on the one hand and irritated the Muslims on the other. To give an example on the point, one of their prominent leaders, Bhai Permanand declared at one such meeting: "Hindustan is the land of the Hindūs alone, and Mussalmans, Christians and other nations living in India are only our guests. They can live here as long as they wish to remain as guests." He further tried to widen the gulf of differences between the two communities on the hitherto vexed question of the *lingua franca* of the country: "Urdu is a

<sup>1</sup> *My Leader*, by Z. A. Suleri (Lahore, 1945), p. 83.



foreign language which is a living monument of our slavery. It must be eradicated from the page of existence. . . Urdu is a language of the *Malichas* which has done a great harm to our national ends by attaining a popularity in India." And sad to say that even Gandhi, the apostle of peace and unity supported the Bhai's views on the language controversy at a meeting of the Sahitya Samelan at Nagpur by proclaiming: "Urdu is the *religious* language of the Mussalmans. It is written in the *Quranic script*, and the Mussalman Badshahs made it and spread it during their times."<sup>1</sup>

Such communalistic prejudice was the sole cause of disturbance in the peaceful atmosphere of the country. Jinnah, therefore, was afforded an opportunity 'to arouse the Mussalmans to the gravity of the situation and stress on them the necessity of organizing themselves.' "The Congress High Command," said he, "declare that they will redress the grievances of the Muslims and they expect the Muslims to accept the declaration. (I want to make it plain to all concerned that we Muslims want no gifts.) The Muslims want no concessions. We Muslims of India have made up our mind to have our fullest rights but we shall have them as rights, not as gifts or concessions."

<sup>1</sup> *Hayat-i-Siyasi, op. cit.*, p. 165.

Fast in its wake came serious communal clashes at Karachi, Bombay, Madras and other places. The Hindu-Muslim tension increased day by day; but came Azad's action in the matter. He once again exerted his energy to set the matters right by clearing the situation. He declared: "The problem is not at all so complicated or stupendous as to defy a solution. All that is wanted is a clear conscience. If the Mussalmans have got any misunderstanding about the Hindus in this respect, it can easily be removed; and if on the other hand there is in fact any high-handedness on the part of the Hindu fanatics, that too can be removed, not by any showy efforts, but by sincerity and sacrifice."

But the temper of the Muslim League now became 'predominantly radical' at this juncture and in the forthcoming Constitution they presented a very strong front against the Congress. At the Bombay Session in 1936, the League passed a resolution condemning the 1935 Act<sup>1</sup> as vigorously as the Congress had done before; but while the Congress had rejected it on the whole, the League, as said above, accepted the Provincial Scheme of the Constitution.

1 The following were the main provisions of the Act :

"(i) It compelled the development of Provincial autonomy by giving the Province a separate legal personality and liberating them entirely from Central control except for certain specific purposes.

(ii) It established full responsible government, subject to 'safe-guards', in all the Provinces (which, with the new Provinces of Sind and Orissa, now numbered eleven).

“Independence cannot be given,” said Jawaharlal Nehru at the Lucknow Session of the Congress in 1936. | “It cannot be got through a new charter of salvery.” | He vehemently denounced the ‘astonishing and fatal suggestion’ by which, he said, ‘independence itself will fade away and narrowest provincialism raise its ugly head. Our policy must be uniform for the whole of India, and it must place first things first, and independence is the first thing of all.’

This resulted in a conflict within the two wings of the Congress, and the Pandit was

(iii) It established ‘The Federation of India,’ comprising both Provinces and States, with a federal Central Government and Legislature for the management of Central subjects.

(iv) Dyarchy, abolished in the Provinces, was reproduced at the Centre. The subjects of foreign affairs and defence were ‘reserved’ to the control of the Governor-General; the other Central subjects were ‘transferred’ to Ministers, subject to similiar ‘safeguards’ as in the Provinces.

(v) The federal principle was recognised in the provisions for the indirect or Provincial election to the lower house of the Central Legislature, but in general the constitution accorded more with the closer than with the looser type of federation.

(vi) On the other controversial issues, the Act maintained the policy of 1917. On the one hand it confirmed and extended parliamentary government in the Provinces and introduced it at the Centre: on the other hand it retained separate electorates, both Provincial and Central, distributing the seats on the lines of the ‘Communal Award’.

(vii) As to Dominion Status, it was officially declared that the provisions of the Act which precluded full self-government were to be regarded as transitional and it was maintained that, mainly by usage and convention, India under the new constitution might quickly acquire the same freedom, internal and external, as that of the other members of the British Commonwealth.”—R. Coupland, *Indian Politics 1936-1942*. (Oxford, 1943.)

denounced by many a Congress official and their press organs. Ultimately, with the help and advice of the Maulana and Gandhi, the Congress Working Committee issued a note stating that the Congressmen shall enter the legislatures 'not to co-operate in any way with the Act, but to combat it and seek the end of it'.

The Congress, thus, girded its loins to fight the forthcoming elections, vigorously and effectively. Sir Harry Haig, the then Governor of the United Provinces writes: "As the time for the election approached, they developed their activities, not spasmodically but continuously, through their resident workers in every village... The sense of impending change awakened the villages... It was too much to expect that the villager would understand the constitutional necessity for this attitude. He felt that the British *raj* was weakening, that the Congress *raj* was coming and as so often happens, threw himself definitely on what seemed to be the winning side."

On July 7, the Congress Working Committee resolved that the Congressmen be permitted to accept office when they might be invited thereto. A Parliamentary Sub-Committee consisting of three of its 'veterans, tried, trusted and true, all of whom had been Congress Presidents, and none of whom had an axe to grind—Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Babu

Rajendraprasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel' was formed at the Congress headquarters. It was given the responsible and intricate task of guiding the Congress ministries in different provinces and directing the Congress members in the Legislatures, and taking necessary action in cases of emergency. Since the area under their control was very extensive, work was allotted to the said three members according to a zonal division, namely: Bombay, Madras, the Central Provinces, and Sind to Patel; Bihar, Orissa, and Assam to Rajendraprasad; and the Muslim-majority provinces of Bengal, the Punjab, and the North-Western Frontier to Abul Kalam Azad for his special care and attention.

Azad's services during the Congress regime in the above provinces deserve a special attention, and we shall speak of them in the next Chapter.

## CHAPTER X

### **Downward Hoe**

The Congress Ministries took office in Bombay, Madras, the Central Provinces, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, and last of all in the North-Western Frontier Province in July 1937, and resigned in October 1939. During this period of the Congress rule in the country, Abul Kalam Azad worked as a steersman in the Parliamentary Sub-Committee with greatest alacrity and aptitude, and displayed a profound ability in carrying out the Congress programme in various provinces.

Troubles began to brew up all over these provinces almost immediately the Congress Ministers took their seats. "Congress electioneering," says Professor Coupland, "had not only been far better organised than that of any other party, it had also been more full-blooded. The more enthusiastic or irresponsible of its canvassers had gone beyond the normal limits of democratic party propaganda in their appeal to the masses. Congress rule, they had said, would usher in a positive millennium of high wages and low rents. There was

danger in this exuberance.”<sup>1</sup> The result was that in Bihar where landlordism had been most oppressive, the cultivators took up arms to have the promised redress from the Congress Ministers. The agitation became more violent in the autumn of 1938 when riots started and peasants began to commit acts of lawlessness at the instigation of a number of ex-political prisoners. A deputation of the Bihar zamindars called upon the Congress leaders at Calcutta, who deputed Abul Kalam Azad to make a settlement between the zamindars and the cultivators in the Province. “I appealed to the zamindars,” said the Maulana, “to do everything with good grace and not to take away with one hand what they gave with the other. And I must say that they responded gracefully. The moral result was superb.” Thus after two years’ excitement the cultivators of Bihar got a sigh of relief through the Maulana’s efforts and ability. An Act was passed in Bihar by which rent was reduced on an average by 25 per cent and the tenants gained something like two to two-and-a-half crores of rupees per annum besides securing proprietary rights of their lands, subject only to payment of rent.

Next, there started the Labour trouble like the peasants revolt in various Congress provinces. During the twenty-seven months of

1 *Indian Politics, op. cit.*, p. 126.

the Congress Government no province was wholly free from strikes. They were organised mostly by the Communist workers and the Congress was well aware that these out-breaks were as much a challenge to their authority as to the rights of the employers. Strong steps were, therefore, taken to enforce law and order in the provinces but the Communists openly began to denounce the Congress, and separating themselves from the ranks of the Congress they started such non-co-operative measures as the Congress once used to do against the old *regime*. The situation took a serious turn. In May 1938 mills in Bombay and Cawnpore were closed down and about 42,000 hands went on strike and began to 'preach revolution'. They made exciting speeches, distributed revolutionary literature and urged for the 'direct action'. The student community joined hands in sympathy with the agitators. At Aligarh the Muslim University students set on fire a police camp and injured some forty policemen.

The Peasants and Labour troubles had hardly been overcome by the Congress, when it had to face the gravest of all its dangers to peace, namely, the communal strife. The seeds of this danger were laid by the Congress propagandists right during the very elections campaign. Here again they had made some vague promises to the Muslims for redressing their grievances, but everything was forgotten



when the Muslim masses came well within the teeth of the Congress machinery. The Congress regarded itself as the national government in every respect. In 1937 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declared: "There is no religious or cultural problem in India. What is called the religious or communal problem is really a dispute among upper class people for a division of the spoils of office or of representation in a legislature. This will surely be settled amicably<sup>1</sup> wherever it arises."

For such an *amicable settlement* the Congress Governments immediately on accepting office, ordered the hoisting of the Congress tri-colour flag on all public buildings, declared the singing of the *Bande Mataram* as essential in the legislatures and schools, and initiated the study and use of Hindi as the *lingua franca* in the country. Next, the *Vidya Mandir* educational scheme was devised and even in provinces like Madras, where people speak mainly Tamil or Telegu, the scheme urged for Hindi as the medium of instruction in the educational institutions.

Striking 'exhibitions of totalitarian mentality were afforded' by the Congressmen to the public. The 'special-trains, profuse garlanding unhorsed carriages, beflagged cars, mass receptions, civic addresses and tumultuous processions' showed that they were the ruling

<sup>1</sup> Italics ours.

class in India. Thousands of Congress workers, members and sympathisers from petty villages and remote hamlets flocked to provincial capitals to have a look at the magnificent buildings under the shadow of the tri-colour with a satisfied look of ownership ; and to have the *darshanas* of their *Khaddar*-clad heroes steering the ship of their destiny. They went home contented that the Congress was really in the *gaddi*.

Communal hatred was its inevitable result. The Hindus were ecstatic over the revival of the *Rama Rajya*, while the Muslims felt annoyed at the deplorable attitude of the Congressmen everywhere from the lowest to the highest ranks. Everywhere the Hindus 'nursing a grievance or wanting a job seemed to have regarded themselves as entitled to the Government's assistance and pestered Ministers or members of the legislature accordingly. All the committees of primary party-members, great and small became quasi-official organs overnight. The 'shadow' Government had materialised. It was the same with the civil services, especially with the police. Thus the Congress made no difference between servants of the Crown and their own workers. Misuse of public funds in establishing rural development schemes, diverting administration of justice 'from the regular channels', setting up private police-stations, private courts and creating a

Congress Army under a 'Military Department clearly shows the creed of the Congress.

The Muslim League was then a relatively small body which had yet to establish the claim that the Muslims were a separate nation and having a distinct claim for its rights; and it was perhaps the 'nemesis of Congress totalitarianism' that compelled Jinnah to take up the task of arousing the Mussalmans against the gravity of the situation stressing upon them the immediate necessity of organising their forces "The Congress High Command," said Jinnah, "declare that they will redress the grievances of the Muslims and they expect the Muslims to accept the declaration. I want to make it plain to all concerned that we Muslims want no gifts. The Muslims want no concessions. We Muslims of India have made up our mind to have our fullest rights . . ."

Jinnah started his work to contend the Congress totalitarianism. The Congress High Command ordered that there should be no Congress-League coalitions in any province, and that the provincial ministries should consist entirely of Congressmen. Thus, the Congress was out on having nothing to do with either the Muslim League or the minority Communities about whose representation there had been so much cry at the Round Table Conferences. In the United Provinces where Muslims,

although in a minority, held a very strong position in urban areas, the Congress had, by promising two seats to the League in the Ministry, agreed to fight the elections on a common platform. But soon after the election results, the Congress offered the seats to the League on certain conditions only, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was responsible for conveying the message to the U. P., League Leader. These conditions were :

“The Muslim League group in the United Provinces Legislature shall cease to function as a separate group.

“The existing members of the Muslim League Party in the United Provinces Assembly shall become part of the Congress Party, and will fully share with other members of the Party their privileges and obligations as members of the Congress Party. They will similarly be empowered to participate in the deliberations of the Party. They will likewise be subject to the control and discipline of the Congress Party in an equal measure with other members, and the decision of the Congress Party as regards work in the legislature and general behaviour of its members shall be binding on them. All matters shall be decided by a *majority vote*<sup>1</sup> of the Party ; each individual member having one vote.

“The policy laid down by the Congress

<sup>1</sup> Italics ours.

Working Committee for their members in the legislatures . . . shall be faithfully carried out by all members of the Congress Party including these members.

*“The Muslim League Parliamentary Board in the United Provinces will be dissolved, and no candidate will thereafter be set up by the said Board at any by-election. All members of the Party shall actively support any candidate that may be nominated by the Congress to fill up a vacancy occurring hereafter.”*<sup>1</sup>

“All members of the Congress Party shall abide by the rules of the Congress Party and offer their full and genuine co-operation with a view to promoting the interests and prestige of the Congress.

“In the event of the Congress Party deciding a resignation from the Ministry or from the legislature the members of the above-mentioned group will also be bound by that decision.”

The Maulana further appended a note to the above statement. It was as follows :

“It is hoped that, if these terms are agreed to and the Muslim League group of members joins the Congress Party as full members, that group would cease to exist as a separate group. In the formation of the Pro-

<sup>1</sup> Italics ours.

vincial Cabinet it is considered proper that they should have representatives."

That 'the degree of their reward is the extent of their perfidy', is clear from the above efforts of an *amicable settlement* of the Congress with the Muslim League. Professor Coupland says on this point again: "These documents speak for themselves. They show that in the first action taken by the Congress leaders under the new constitution in their first move in the field of Parliamentary politics, there was nothing of that spirit of compromise without which parliamentary government cannot be expected to work successfully or long. The logic of 'majority rule' was to be strictly enforced. The Congress would form no coalition with a minority party. If League politicians wanted a share in government, they must join the Congress and submit to the control of Congress bodies in all of which the Muslim members would be in a minority. If this ultimatum were accepted, it was frankly hoped, and with good reason, that the League would cease to exist."

Thus, we see how the Congress, instead of being a national organisation, became a symbol of the revivalism of the ancient and 'glorious' *Rama Rajya*. The whole situation was distressful. How far in such circumstances can we blame Abul Kalam Azad for inaction, is very difficult to say. The Congress High

Command, no doubt was responsible for the policy and the dictatorial methods of approach to the other parties, but it was again bound to follow the commands of the '*permanent super-President*'—Gandhi who, though not even a four-anna member of the party, was the most powerful guiding force behind the Congress machinery. Who can overrule Gandhi in the Congress even to-day? I am here reminded of the fate of Subhas Chandra Bose, who once sought an election to the Presidentship of the Congress and won the seat by a clear majority against the wishes of Gandhi; but on the following day the old gentleman worked his magic wand. All the members of the Working Committee, except perhaps Sarat Chandra Bose and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, resigned their posts at a hint from Gandhi, and in the absence of their President-Elect moved and passed a resolution to follow the word of the *Bapu*. Bose had no other way left but to resign from the Congress and form his 'Forward Bloc'. This clearly illustrates the 'super-Presidential' authority of Gandhi under whose vigilance Abul Kalam Azad and his other two colleagues in the Parliamentary Sub-Committee had to labour. It was, therefore, his dictatorial hand that was behind the Congress Government, and Azad could hardly go beyond that unless he risked a clash with the Gandhian policy that was being superimposed over the Congress creed during that period.

Thus, the Hindu-Muslim antagonism increased once again. There were serious riots at Jubbulpore, Allahabad and Benares during 1937. In April 1938 there was a riot in Bombay and again in July and August there were serious clashes at several places in Bihar, the United Provinces, the North-Western Frontier, and Madras. Such disturbances went on in the country throughout the entire regime of twenty-seven months of the Congress Governments. "For twenty-seven months," says Mr. Suleri, "Congress remained in power and for twenty-seven months the Muslim League under Jinnah's guidance remained on the watch, gathering instances of the manifestation of Hindu mentality at work, till was piled up the *Pirpur Report*.

"Gandhi's seventeen-year long unchallenged leadership of Indian politics could not have done for the 'unification' of Indians, what twenty-seven months of Congress regime did to disrupt that 'unity' facade. The Congress Rule was a Godsend chance to Jinnah to bring out the fact that the Congress regime could not, but be a communal regime of the Hindu majority. Jinnah's agitation culminated in the demand for a Royal Commission to investigate into the grievances of Mussalmans. Thus, he proved beyond doubt that the Hindu and Mussalmans were two distinct people and that the Mussalmans could never allow themselves to be sunk



in the nationalism of Hindus which was sought to be built up under the patronage of the British . . . ”

The *Pirpur Report* was followed up by literature of a similiar nature like the *Shareef Report* based upon an enquiry into the grievances of Muslims in Bihar, the *Kamal Yar Jung Report* showing the position of the Muslim education under the Congress Governments, and last but not least the statement issued to the press and subsequently published in a booklet form by Maulvi A. K. Fazl-ul-Haq, entitled *Muslim Sufferings under Congress Rule*. This literature was based upon the incidents of the Muslim sufferings in different provinces and in different fields during the twenty-seven months of the Congress rule. It spoke how cow-sacrifice was prevented in villages, butchers were assaulted, pork was thrown in mosques, Muslim prayers were interrupted by music and hullabaloo of the incendiaries, Muslim shops were boycotted and Mussalmans were attacked irrespective of age and sex; Muslim school-boys were obliged to honour the Congress flag, to sing the *Bande Mataram* with folded hands, and obliged to wear *Khaddar* clothes, ‘Gandhi-caps’ and worship Gandhi’s portrait on the occasion of his birthday.

These incidents were enough to heighten the Hindu-Muslim tension and increase rioting and bloodshed. Jinnah therefore took up

arms to combat the Congress Governments' policy of 'the systematic persecution of the Muslims' by constitutional methods similar to those which the Congress itself had since long applied against the Government of India. It was resolved at the Patna Session of the League in December 1938: "That the time has come to authorise the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League to decide and resort to direct action if and when necessary."

## II

While Congress meant India and India meant Congress to the Hindus, they received the Muslim cries and protests with gibes, lampoons and insults. Jinnah, with his carefully nursed temperature denounced the existing regime of the Hindu-majority rule, and began to think out a plan about the Muslim emancipation. In October 1938 the All-India Muslim League met at Karachi and resolved: "This Conference, in the interests of abiding peace of the vast Indian Continent and of unhampered cultural development, economic and social betterment, and *political self-determination* of the Hindus and Muslims, recommends to the All-India Muslim League to review the entire question of what should be a suitable constitution for India, which will secure an honourable and legitimate status due to the Muslims, and further devise a scheme of

constitution under which the Muslims may attain full independence."

Fortunately the threat of '*direct action*' and the adoption of the well-tried Congress weapon of Civil Disobedience was not taken up by Jinnah for the war-clouds suddenly darkened the political sphere, and the Congress opposition of the Government became harder than ever before. To meet the war emergency, it was essential for the Government to establish the Federation at the earliest opportunity, but the Congress did not wish 'to bargain' at that moment. It, therefore resolved that "India must be declared an independent nation, and present application must be given to this status to the largest possible extent." Jinnah only asked the Government for 'justice and fair play' to the Muslims in the Congress provinces, and required an assurance 'that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League for it was the only organisation that could speak on behalf of Muslim India.'

The leaders of the Mahasabha, the Parsis, the Depressed Classes and other minority communities as well wrote to the Viceroy warning that Gandhi's claim that the Congress was 'the only party in the land' would be a death-blow to democracy.

Lord Linlithgow, the then Viceroy interviewed some fifty leaders of different political parties in India to deal with 'the British Government's war aims, its intentions as to the future status of India, and the closer association of India for the prosecution of the war.' The Congress leaders again claimed to be representing not any particular group or community, but the whole of the Indian nation, and while openly repudiating the Viceroy's scheme, called upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations.

The Congress Ministries resigned by November 15, 1939, and a few weeks thereafter the Muslim League observed the *Deliverance Day* all over the country, for the Muslim population in the eight Congress provinces had been relieved of the Congress rule. At that moment Jinnah declared: "The British people must realise that Hinduism and Islam 'represent two distinct and separate civilisations' and, moreover, are 'as distinct from one another in origin, tradition and manner of life as are nations of Europe'... They are in fact two different nations, and if this fact is accepted by no less an authority than the Joint Select Committee, the Muslim people have cause to question the wisdom of the British Government in forcing on India the Western system of democracy without the qualification and limitations to which the system must be subject to

make it at all suitable for Indian conditions. . . A parliamentary system based on the majority principle must inevitably mean the rule of the major nation. Experience has proved that, whatever the economic and political programme of any political party, the Hindu, as a general rule, will vote for his caste-fellow and the Muslim for his co-religionist. . . Therefore Western democracy is totally unsuited for India and its imposition will be resisted by the Mussalmans."

This was a direct hit to the Congress principle of the Hindu-Muslim unity for which Abul Kalam Azad had devoted practically the whole of his life. His reaction was, therefore, remarkable at this occasion. The Maulana said: "Mankind is one race, and we have to live in harmony with one another. Providence brought us together over a thousand years ago. We have fought, but so do blood-brothers fight. So did Englishmen fight—as in the wars of the Roses. But they did not insist on living as separate nations . . . In a future constitution determined by India's representatives, the Hindu or the Mussalman will have to think of the position and interests not as a Hindu or a Mussalman, but as a peasant or a zamindar, as a labourer or a capitalist, and so on. Religious freedom will be one of the fundamental rights under free constitution, but whatever that constitution, it will be nothing worth unless it

reflects equality of opportunity of economic freedom for all. But why must I argue like this? (Let Mr. Jinnah get himself elected by the Muslims and come to the Constituent Assembly and press his demands on behalf of the Muslim India.)

“The Muslims have a full right to make whatever kind of struggle they deem fit in the cause of their rights and interests. But this is their internal dispute. They should, under no circumstances, take any step which can possibly be used against the freedom of India. The present attitude of Mr. Jinnah is leading them towards this unfortunate position. It clearly means that the Muslims are being made as stumbling-block in the path of India's freedom. I warned the Muslims in 1912 against this. It wounds my heart to the core that the need of reiterating the same has again arisen after twenty-seven years.

... “I have often declared before and again do the same with all possible sense of responsibility that all these accusations against the Congress Ministries are absolutely baseless. It is a mountain of falsehoods to say that the policy of the Congress Ministries was ‘decidedly anti-Muslim’ and that they have been trampling down the religious, economic and political rights of the Mussalmans ...

“If Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues think

that they are saying these things to benefit the cause of the Muslims, I would tell them in all earnestness that they are doing quite the opposite thing and they will do a true service to the Muslims of India if they change their direction as early as possible, the true service for which the Indian Muslims are in the greatest need to-day."

Azad meant freedom through unity. It seemed true in 1912; it seemed true in the Khilafat days; but now? It looked to be an impossibility.) It looked like uniting 'two phenomena of opposite drifts', for Hindus and Muslims belonged to two different religious philosophies, each having different social customs, dress, food, habits, arts and letters. Jinnah remarked once on this point: "We maintain and hold that Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calendar, history and traditions, aptitude and ambitions. In short, we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation."

Thus, while Azad meant freedom through unity of the two hostile nations, Jinnah meant freedom through their right of self-determina-

tion, because who can deny that there exists something "like a race in armaments between these two people? If the Hindus have the Benares University the Muslims must have the Aligarh University; if the Hindus start one movement, the Muslims launch another; if the Hindus have the R.S.S., the Muslims reply by organising the Khaksars. This race in social armament and equipment is run with the determination and apprehension of nations which are on the war path. The Muslims fear that the Hindus are subjugating them; the Hindus feel that the Muslims are engaged in reconquering them. Both appear to be preparing for war".<sup>1</sup>

This difference of beliefs led to the widening of the gulf of communal differences; this led to air the partition scheme, and this ultimately led to the birth of Pakistan in March, 1940, when at the Lahore Session of the League, the famous resolution was passed: "Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principle, *viz.*, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on Pakistan*, by Dr. Ambedkar (Bombay 1938), p. 242.



Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

Thus the Hindu-Muslim schism led to the foundation of an Empire !

### III

While Jinnah proclaimed that there were two nations in India—the Hindus and the Muslims, the Congress believed in the existence of one and only one. The Lahore Resolution was received by the batteries of the Hindu Press which started 'firing at full blast'. Pakistan meant 'the vivisection of Mother India', 'killing the cow', and 'cutting the baby' for them. Abul Kalam Azad organised at Delhi an All-India Independent Muslim Conference with the late Allah Bakhsh, ex-Premier of Sind, and denounced the Partition Scheme repudiating the League's claim to represent the Muslim India. Partition was a sin in the Maulana's political creed, but Jinnah proclaimed: "We do not want in any circumstances a constitution of All-India character with one Government at the Centre. We will never agree to that. If we once agree to that, let me tell you the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence . . . Achieve Pakistan or perish."

The pith and soul of Pakistan is that 'the Mussalmans are a Nation'. Said Jinnah: "The Muslims are a nation . . . Our outlook is not only fundamentally different but often radically antagonistic to the Hindus. We are different *beings*. There is nothing in life which links us together. Our names, our clothes, our foods—they are all different; our economic life, our educational ideas, our treatment of women, our attitude to animals . . . we challenge each other at every point of the compass. Take one example, the eternal question of the cow. We eat the cow, the Hindus worship it. A lot of Englishmen imagine that this 'worship' is merely a picturesque convention, an historical survival. It is nothing of the sort. Only a few days ago, in this very city, the cow question became a matter for the police. The Hindus were thrown into the greatest agitation because cows were being killed in public. But the cow question is only one of a thousand."<sup>1</sup>

Abul Kalam's Independent Muslim Conference was organised with a powerful Hindu Press and Congress backing. Once again Azad was honoured with the Presidential chair in the Congress, and once again he redoubled his efforts for the unity by starting what is known as the Mass Contact Movement. He tried to approach Jinnah to find out some means of a

<sup>1</sup> *Verdict on India*, by Beverley Nichols (Bombay 1944) p. 190.

compromise, but the latter refused to see him saying: "You are a Show-boy of the Congress. Give it up."

Show-boy of the Congress! Azad—treacherous to the Mussalmans! How?

Azad and Jinnah were the 'two phenomena of opposite drifts'. Azad wanted freedom through a united India. Jinnah called it a vague, absurd and chimerical dream.

#### IV

Resuming the Presidential chair in 1940, Azad started a ceaseless campaign against the policy of Pakistan and efforts to divide the Hindus and the Muslims. He declared in his famous address in that year: "I would remind my co-religionists that today I stand exactly where I stood in 1912, when I addressed them on this issue. . . . I repeat today what I have been saying throughout this entire period, that the ninety millions of Mussalmans of India have no other right course of action than the one to which I invited them in 1912.

— "I am a Mussalman, and feel proud that I am so, for the thirteen-hundred years' glorious traditions of Islam have come to my inheritance. I am, therefore, not prepared to part with its least part.) Islamic education, history, sciences, arts and culture are the

riches in my possession, and it is my duty to protect them. As a Mussalman, I hold a distinct position in the cultural field, wherein I cannot stand any interference. But with all these feelings, I possess another instinct which the realities of my life have created and from which the spirit of Islam cannot check me. It is that I am proud of feeling that I am an Indian and a member of the indivisible and united nationality of India . . .

“Full eleven centuries have passed by since then (*i.e.*, the advent of Islam in India). Islam has now as great a claim on the soil of India as Hinduism. If Hinduism has been the religion of the people here for several thousands of years, Islam also has been their religion for a thousand years” . . .

Concluding, he said: “Do we, Indian Mussalmans, view the free India of the future with suspicion and distrust, or with courage and confidence? If we view it with fear and suspicion, then undoubtedly we have to follow a different path. No present declaration, no promise for the future, no constitutional safeguards can be a remedy for our doubts and fears. We are then forced to tolerate the existence of a third power. This third power is already entrenched here and has no intention of withdrawing and, if we follow this path of fear, we must needs look forward to its continuance. But if we are convinced that

for us fear and doubt have no place, and that we must view the future with courage and confidence in ourselves, then our course of action becomes absolutely clear. We find ourselves in a new world, which is free from the dark shadows of doubt, vacillation, inaction and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, action and enthusiasm never fails. The confusions of the times, the ups and downs that come our way, the difficulties that beset our thorny path, cannot change the direction of our steps. It becomes our bounden duty then to march with assured steps to India's national goal.

"I arrived at this definite conclusion without the least hesitation, and every fibre of my body revolted against the former alternative. I could not bear the thought of it. I could not conceive it possible for a Mussalman to tolerate this, unless he had rooted out the spirit of Islam from every corner of his being."

(But to Jinnah self-reliance and self-organisation of the Mussalmans was the basis of all future advance for the ultimate goal.) To Muslims he said: "Muslim India will never agree to submit its future destiny and fate or its rights in the governance of this country, or in the making of any future constitution, into the hands of a tribunal of Mr. Gandhi's conception, or of any other variety; nor are we prepared to accept the final arbitrament of

Great Britain. *We must and shall be the sole and final judges of what is best for us . . . We shall fight for it to the last ditch.*” Pakistan; Pakistan became the cry of the day. And it was here that Azad found in Jinnah the most ‘arrogant’, ‘uncompromising’ and ‘unrelenting’ antagonist in his political sphere.

## V

While the war furnaces blazed high, the Congress thought it high time to coerce the British into conceding their demands. The Viceroy was thus obliged to restart negotiations in the early part of 1940. It was given out that the objective of the Government was that India should attain full Dominion Status —‘of the Statute of Westminster variety’— as soon as possible after the war; and as an immediate step, it was proposed to enlarge the Executive Council of the Viceroy by appointing some of the representatives of the prominent political parties in the country.

But the Viceroy’s invitation to such political parties was resented by the Maulana, saying that it was the initial blunder of the Viceroy to invite representatives of all possible groups and interests, without regard for the fact that many of those groups were no real minorities. “The whole of minority problem”, said the Maulana, “is a creation of the British

Government, and is the culmination of a steady prosecution of the policy of 'Divide and Rule' over a period of well nigh four decades." That Azad was determined to give no way, was shown again by the resolution framed by the Working Committee under his Presidentship at Ramgarh in March 1940:

"The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialistic ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India . . .

"The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete Independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and Dominion Status or any other status within the imperial structure is wholly inapplicable to India, is not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure" . . .

In conclusion, the Maulana refused to recognise the validity of any other political party or organisation outside the Congress by saying: "The Congress seeks to represent and serve all classes and communities without distinction of race or religion, and the struggle

for Indian Independence is for the freedom of the whole nation. Hence the Congress cherishes the hope that all classes and communities will take part in it. The purpose of civil disobedience is to evoke the spirit of sacrifice in the whole nation."

As a result of this resolution the Congress once again decided to launch the Civil Disobedience movement under the guidance of '*the self-appointed general of the satyagraha army*'—Gandhi, entrusting him all powers of 'war and peace'. The negotiations with the Viceroy failed, and the Maulana refused the Viceroy's invitation to discuss any more with him, for he stated that his 'August Offer' was totally at variance with the Congress policy. On September 15, he declared that the time had come to take the next step. The Congress leftists wanted the Civil Disobedience Movement to be organised on the largest possible scale, but Gandhi insisted on an *individual* or *representative* Satyagraha to be conducted only by those individuals whom he 'himself would choose for the purpose. (Abul Kalam was in favour of a mass movement, but he had to yield to Gandhi. Accordingly, his turn for the *individual* Satyagraha came on December 13, 1940, when he was arrested and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment for making a speech against the Government.)

1 Given by Mahadev Desai in "*Abul Kalam Azad*," *op. cit.*



The Satyagraha Movement continued throughout the course of the year 1941, and while 'resentment was unrelieved', and the 'deadlock' was 'unresolved', the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour 'gave a new and ominous turn to the war' and the Indian political affairs.

(The Tokyo radio began to cry hoarse that the Japanese, linked with the Indians by the Buddhist faith, were coming only to relieve them of the clutches of the British tyranny.) The spectacular advance of the Japanese in the ensuing winter and their penetration into Malaya and Burma shook the security of this country. Anti-British feelings grew more intense and the Japanese propagandists made the Congress believe that 'the British Empire was collapsing and would drag India down with it'. Thus, in the face of so great a danger, the Viceroy made an appeal to the country for a united action. (Abul Kalam Azad and other Satyagrahis were released from jails, and under instructions from Gandhi a meeting of the Working Committee was convened to review the situation. The Committee decided to start a 'parallel Government' in order to cope with the coming emergency by itself, rather than to modify its previous demands. The Maulana declared: "I am prepared to accept the independence of my country at any moment. . . The only thing is that it should be

real independence. And the only Congressite of note who advocated an agreement with the Muslim League for making a united national front to solve the political deadlock, and to fight for the freedom of the country, was Rajagopalachari; but the League, on its side, reiterated its claim for Pakistan as the only solution of the constitutional problem of the country. It believed in Pakistan to be the only and the safest course for the freedom of India, for Pakistan 'offered no insuperable difficulties, economic, ethnographic, political or strategic'. It declared that this was 'of course a major surgical operation, but unfortunately there were occasions in the lives of nations, as of individuals, when major surgical operations were not only desirable but vitally necessary.'

The League made its position quite clear on the issue of its participation in the war efforts. It would not obstruct such efforts, for it was more concerned with the longer, but easier way of the attainment of Pakistan through the success of the British arms rather than inviting the Japanese bayonets on the Indian soil in the vain hope of an immediate decision of its fate. The only assurance which it required from the British was that the latter would not let the Muslims down by entering into an agreement, either interim or final, with the Congress and thereby 'prejudging

and prejudicing the issue of Pakistan'. Said Jinnah: "We promise to give a great deal in men, money and other materials—in fact, the whole-hearted support of ninety million of the Muslims. I am prepared to bring to the common pool all this, but I must have equal, real and effective share in the power."

Thus, Jinnah stood his ground as firmly as Azad. As days passed, the Japanese approached steadily towards the Indian frontier, and the situation looked more serious. Four days after the fall of Rangoon the War Cabinet unanimously decided to send Sir Stafford Cripps to India to discuss with various political leaders a new Draft Declaration of the British policy.

The principal feature of the Cripps Offer<sup>1</sup> was that it went some considerable distance towards satisfying Indian opinion. It suggested the right of self-determination for every province, and the formation of one or more Indian unions<sup>2</sup>. For the matter of defence of India, the British Government wanted to retain

<sup>1</sup> Text given in Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> "The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution, to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires.

"With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down."

its complete control as part of their world-war effort.

The Viceroy declared that the bold and generous offer of Cripps gave India a great opportunity to solve her problem, and that the offer was made in the hope that when war had come so close to India and threatened its national life, it might arouse, as in other countries, a spirit of unity and co-operation that would have over-ridden political differences in the hour of danger, but the hope was not fulfilled.

The Maulana declared that he would be the first man to draw the sword in defence of his country provided an immediate declaration of independence was made for India. By this he meant 'not Dominion Status, but a break away from the British Crown and Commonwealth', for the Cripps offer contained a most unsatisfactory interim arrangement for the country. To him the most undesirable and unacceptable feature of the offer was the right accorded to a province or state to accept or refuse the new constitution and to retain its present constitutional position. This was to him, a move to paralyse and ultimately to crush the ideal of a free and united India. It meant that India would be divided into independent units whenever the Provinces or States chose to separate themselves from the principal union. Further, it meant to him

the perpetual suzerainty of the British, since no individual Province or State was likely to retain its political independence in such circumstances, and would have been obliged to seek their patronage and help against each other.

Jinnah insisted as strongly as Azad on the question of independence; but he did not ask for an immediate declaration. He fiercely opposed the Congress programme making it clear that 'no *interim* constitutional change must be made which might prejudice the principle of Pakistan'.

Although Pakistan was recognised by implication in the Draft Declaration, its primary object was to create one Indian Union, 'the creation of more than one Union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility'. But since this clause afforded 'the same full status as the Indian Union' to the non-acceding provinces, the Maulana was greatly disappointed at the offer, and declared that it was the old 'Divide and Rule' spirit that had actuated the British to make such an offer. On this point Jawaharlal Nehru stated: "Thirty years ago, the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India, not only into two, but possibly

many separate parts. This was one of the reasons which led to bitter resentment of the Cripps' proposals. The All-India Congress could not agree to this."

On April 10, 1942, the Maulana wrote to Cripps: . . . "the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. The new government could neither be called, except vaguely and inaccurately, nor could it function as a National Government. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes, but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new government would function as a free government. . . While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly National Government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future, though as we have indicated, we hold definite views about it. But in the present state the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full power, and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council."

Sir Stafford Cripps replied explaining his offer in the light of the Maulana's objections:

“The real substance of your refusal to take part in a National Government is that the form of Government suggested is not such as would enable you to rally the Indian people as you desire. You made two suggestions. First that the constitution might now be changed. In this respect I would point out that you made this suggestion for the first time last night, nearly three weeks after you had received the proposals, and I would further remark that every other representative with whom I have discussed this view has accepted the practical impossibility of any such legislative change in the middle of a war and such a moment as the present. Second, you suggest ‘a truly National Government’ framed which must be ‘Cabinet Government with full power’. Without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale, this would not be possible as you realise. Were such a system to be introduced by convention under the existing circumstances the nominated cabinet (nominated presumably by the major political organisations) responsible to no one but itself, could not be removed and would in fact constitute absolute dictatorship of the majority. This suggestion would be rejected by all minorities in India, since it would subject all of them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the cabinet. Nor would it be consistent with the pledges already given by His Majesty

Government to protect the rights of those minorities. In a country such as India, where communal divisions are still so deep, an irresponsible majority Government of this kind is not possible.” . . .

Thus, Abul Kalam's demand for full Cabinet Government without any over-ruling power, was tantamount to an ultimatum breaking off negotiations, and consequent failure of the Cripp's Mission.

## VI

On May 2, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee met at Allahabad and made Gandhi the undisputed master of the Congress movement. The old gentleman, seeing that the British were ‘at the lowest ebb of their power’ insisted on the ‘immediate abdication of Britain's share in Indian Government.’

“British rule in India must end immediately,” said the Congress resolution. “Should, however, this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and the weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent forces it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as



part of its policy, for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi". . .

(A) This resolution again showed that Abul Kalam Azad, though President of the Congress, was not its 'sovereign' or 'the Rashtrapati' as they called him. He was only to follow the commands of Gandhi, who was not even an ordinary member of the Congress, and who had interviewed Cripps in his individual capacity only. Although the Maulana explained to the people that the above resolution was not an ultimatum to the British, Gandhi interpreted it otherwise: "There is no room left for negotiation; either they recognise India's independence or they don't . . . There is no question of 'one more chance'. After all this is open rebellion."

( This '*open rebellion*' resolution was passed in July, 1942. Again on August 7, Gandhi declared at a meeting of the Congress Committee at Bombay: "We shall get our freedom by fighting, it cannot fall from the skies." But before the fight actually began, Azad, Gandhi and other members of the Working Committee were arrested and imprisoned under the Defence of India Rules.

All over the country acts of 'lawlessness, including attempts to interrupt communica-

tions, to foment strikes, to tamper with the loyalty of Government servants and to interfere with recruitment became rife.' Police stations, post offices and other buildings belonging to the Government or Municipal corporations were smashed, looted and set on fire. At various places Government officials were attacked, roads were blocked and communications were dislocated with serious consequences.

By the end of September, the rebellion lost its force although stray cases of disturbances continued to occur for a sufficiently long time after that. A remarkable thing about this 'do or die' campaign of the Congress was that the Muslim League remained quiet *en masse* throughout that period. Jinnah declared that the Mussalmans were opposed to the August Resolution, and were against the movement. He, therefore, wanted them to keep aloof from the campaign and watch the show.

Once again the country was found divided, and once again Gandhi faced a crushing defeat. He attempted to obtain his release in the early part of 1943, but the Viceroy wanted an assurance that he would abandon his policy of August last which, unfortunately, Gandhi refused to give. The Viceroy's subsequent refusal to release him unless he disavowed the policy of rebellion, was replied by Gandhi with a very serious step. He stirred

the emotions of the country by starting a three-weeks' fast as a protest against the policy of the Government to keep him away from a contact with the country and the people. Luckily the fast was successfully terminated and both the Government and the people heaved a sigh of relief.

An important change in the administrative personnel of the Government occurred on June 18, 1943, when Lord Wavell's appointment to the Viceroyalty was announced. This news took people by surprise, and it was believed in Congress circles that this appointment meant the continuance of the 'Linlithgow policy with an additional touch of military mind.' But the Viceroy-designate announced: "I am a sincere friend of India, and am wholeheartedly in sympathy with her aspirations to political developments"; but he wanted India's whole-hearted war-efforts to remove the Japanese menace for the achievement of full self-government by the people of India.

"We offered a suggestion in the Cripps' proposals," said Lord Wavell, "which may or may not have been suitable. If Indians can devise a method which will produce agreement more readily, so much the better. If I may offer a personal opinion born of some experience, the smaller the body which discusses a difficult and controversial problem, the more likely it is that profitable solution will emerge...

“What arrangement you decide to make for the two great communities and certain other important minorities, as well as the Indian States, to live within that unit and to make the best use of its wealth and opportunities, is for Indians to decide. That two communities and even two nations can make arrangements to live together in spite of differing cultures or religions, history provides many examples. The solutions of the problems have varified...

“There is an important element (*i. e.*, Congress) which stands aloof ; I recognise how much ability and highmindedness it contains ; but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and unpracticable. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and future problems of India...

“I believe firmly in the future of India,” said the Viceroy in conclusion. “I am a sincere friend of India. I should like to help her political advance, but my military training has made me quite certain that no objective is ever gained without the fullest measure of co-operation from all concerned.”

Gandhi was released on grounds of ill-health after the Government made sure that he had no intention of taking up the Civil Disobedience Movement again. He, therefore, adopted a policy of complete silence about political

affairs ; but on July 10, 1944, Rajagopalachari in consultation with, and approval of Gandhi, published a formula<sup>1</sup> for a compromise between the Congress and the League for 'enabling them jointly to assault the Imperial citadel'. But Jinnah did not agree to its terms. He declared : " Mr. Rajagopalachari's formula is a parody of a negation and intended to torpedo the Muslim League's resolution of March, 1940 ; and when he says that his formula concedes all that the Muslim League had ever demanded by its resolution, it is the grossest travesty. First of all where does he find any mention of plebiscite in that resolution and especially plebiscite districtwise ? " Jinnah invited Gandhi in all fairness to come forth for a settlement. " Let Mr. Gandhi join hands with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan in plain and unequivocal language and we shall be nearer independence for the peoples of India which is so dear to the heart of not only Mr. Gandhi, but of the millions of this country. (Mr. Gandhi and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari are putting the cart before the horse when they say that all these clauses can have any value or can become effective if Great Britain transfers power to India. There is no chance of it unless Hindus and Muslims unite and by means of united front bring it out from the unwilling hands of the rulers of Great Britain."

<sup>1</sup> Text given in Appendix III.

The prospects of a political settlement between India and Britain thus remained remote as ever. On September 9, (Gandhi) went to Jinnah to discuss in person about the Hindu-Muslim problem *in his individual capacity* again. The talks prolonged for fourteen days, but the ultimate result was nil. Gandhi and Jinnah once again proved to be the 'two phenomena of opposite drifts.' "I could not accept the two-nation basis," said Gandhi. "I want to make it clear that I believe Mr. Jinnah is sincere, but I think he is suffering from hallucination when he imagines that an unnatural division of India could bring either happiness or prosperity to the people concerned." To this Jinnah replied, "What is the use of misleading the people and making confusion worse confounded if we accept these terms, which present us with a veritable trap and a slough of death? It means the burial of Pakistan. But I see some ray of hope still when he says, 'if Rajaji and I have stultified the Lahore Resolution,<sup>1</sup> we would be educated'."

"I tried to do so, as far as Gandhi was concerned, for three weeks, but his ailment is so long-standing and so chronic that it is beyond the reach of a physician."

The only thing which the Gandhi-Jinnah talks established, was the practicability of a zonal division of India, which Gandhi accepted

<sup>1</sup> Text given in Appendix I.

in terms of the C. R. Formula. Nationalism met with serious set-back, and the lowest common measure of the agreement was that the division of the country into a Hindu and a Muslim zone would be the solution of the communal tangle.

Yet another attempt to adjust the Hindu-Muslim differences was made by the Sapru Committee, which issued its proposals<sup>1</sup> on April 8, 1945. These were based upon parity between the Hindus on the one hand and the Muslims on the other in the constitution-making body, the future Central Legislature and the Executive. They provided safeguards in sufficient measure for the minorities, but emphasised upon the preservation of the unity of India and joint electorates: "The Committee having considered carefully the resolution of the Muslim League passed at Lahore in 1940, the various other resolutions of the League and the published version of the talks between Mr. Jinnah and M. Gandhi, and having also considered the C. R. and Gandhi proposals, is emphatically of opinion that any division of India into two or more separate independent sovereign states is unjustified, and will endanger the peace and orderly progress of the whole country without any compensating advantage to any community, and that the political unity of India should, therefore, be

<sup>1</sup> Summary of the proposals given in Appendix IV.

maintained." This was certainly a rejection of the Muslim League's demand of Pakistan although Gandhi himself had agreed to the validity of 'division as brothers.' Hence the Muslim League was justified in saying that 'one of the objects of the Sapru intervention was to blot out Mr. Gandhi's commitment.' The fate of the Sapru Committee proposals was known beyond any shadow of doubt from its very outset, and without much consideration they were given a place beside the C. R. Formula among the rejects of Jinnah.

## VII

With the Congress behind the prison bars, there seemed to be no hope of ending the deadlock in the country. (Lord Wavell, therefore, flew to London to seek a solution of the Indian problem.) Speculations had naturally started ever since his visit to London, but they really became serious after his return to India. (On June 14, 1945, Lord Wavell broadcast his Plan,<sup>1</sup> proposing to invite Indian leaders with a view 'to forming a new Executive Council with more representatives of organised political opinion.') The proposed Council was to represent caste Hindus and Muslims in equal proportion, and with the exception of the post of the Viceroy and that of the Commander-in-Chief as War Member, the Council was to

<sup>1</sup> Text given in Appendix V.



be Indianised in its entirety. The Plan spoke of the main tasks of the new Executive Council as under :

1. To prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated.
2. To carry on the Government of British India with all the manifold tasks of post-war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and come into force.
3. To consider when members of Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved.

It was further proposed to release immediately members of the Congress Working Committee, and invite Abul Kalam Azad and Gandhi as recognized leaders of the party to take counsel with the Viceroy in forming the interim Government.

Thus, Abul Kalam Azad and other members of the Working Committee were set free after an imprisonment of 34 months to deliberate over the new Plan. The Maulana was given full and plenary powers by the Working Committee to deal with all phases of the negotiations to end the deadlock, and 'was also authorized to take whatever action was

necessary to implement the results of the negotiations'. But in spite of the 'atmosphere of goodwill' among representatives of all parties, the Simla Conference could not solve the problem or end the deadlock in any way.

The first point upon which the Maulana differed from Jinnah was that while he wanted to nominate certain Nationalist Muslims from the Congress as members of the proposed Executive Council showing thereby that the Congress was the representative of all Communities in the country, Jinnah objected that it was the right of the Muslim League alone to name the Muslim members of the Council, since the League was the only recognised organisation of the Mussalmans of India. The Maulana said: "Lord Wavell rightly adjourned the Conference to enable the parties to come to terms, but the Muslim League claimed the sole right to nominate all the Muslim representatives on the new Executive Council. This claim was untenable and unsustainable and the Congress could not accept this position. The Congress was not a Hindu body. It could not wipe out the history of fifty years. I as a Muslim would not tolerate the Congress becoming a purely Hindu body." Jinnah replied that the League and the Congress approached the problem from two opposite sides: "Pakistan and United India," said he, "were diametrically opposed to each other

... The Mussalmans of India were determined to have Pakistan. The League was willing to consider proposals for the formation of an interim Government if a declaration was made guaranteeing to the Muslims the right of self-determination in accordance with the Lahore Resolution and the League was accorded equality of representation with all other parties on the new Government."

The Maulana thus, by refusing to recognise the Muslim League claim to represent all the Muslims of India, and submitting his own nominees on behalf of the Muslims, and further, insisting on one or two non-Muslims being included in the Muslim quota of the allotment, proved himself to be partly responsible for the failure of the Simla Conference. He made it clear to the Viceroy that the Congress was prepared to go forward, and if a certain group (*i.e.*, the Muslim League) wished to keep out, it might be left out. "But such a move was not accepted by the Viceroy, who 'graciously took the blame on himself for the failure of the Conference by saying: "The main idea underlying the Conference was mine. If it had succeeded, its success would have been attributed to me and I cannot place the blame for its failure upon any of the parties.'" But the Maulana found both Jinnah and the Viceroy responsible for the breakdown of talks: "Two points arise out of the present," said he; "the first

is that the attitude of the Muslim League has been responsible for the failure of the Conference. The second point which emerges from the refusal of the Muslim League is that it is for Lord Wavell to decide whether to go forward or not. His Excellency has decided not to proceed for the present. In this connection I must say what I said at the Conference. The British Government could not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the communal problem here. So long as the third party remains in India, these difficulties will remain as pawns on a chess-board and will continue to move in this fashion. Whether it is today or tomorrow they must take up a firm stand on a just and fair basis. There is no other alternative but to do that. And once a decision is taken, we must move forward. Those who are prepared to go forward must be allowed to go forward, and those who wish to be kept out, should be left out. Without determination nothing could be done. Wavering minds and faltering steps will never carry us forward in the path of progress. We must think before we take a step. And once we decide, hesitation is no virtue but a sign of definite weakness. There is nothing new in this so-called communal problem."

At the end of the Conference the Viceroy made it clear again that there would be no change in the present administrative machinery

without the coming together of the main elements in the political sphere of the country, for while the Muslim League insisted upon the recognition of its right to nominate all the Muslim members of the Executive Council as the sole representative body of the Muslims, the Congress refused to admit this claim and insisted on its national character and consequently upon its right of nominating the Muslim members of the Executive Council.

Thus, the deadlock continued despite all efforts and 'good-will' of the parties.

### VIII

The Cripps Offer had promised that immediately upon cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India . . . an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India' and 'the earliest possible realization of self-government in India'. The Simla Conference had met in the abnormal circumstances of the war for forming an interim Government, but the proposals were not agreed upon because of the inadequacy of such arrangements. Now with the sudden end of hostilities the entire political situation has changed, and with a view to the above offer of Sir Stafford Cripps, the Maulana hopes to come to a permanent solution of the problem aided by the sincerity of the Labour Government towards this country.

The elections to the Central and Provincial Legislatures have been called for, and it is expected that the Viceroy will bring forth fresh proposals from the Whitehall after the results of elections are known. The Maulana, therefore, is once again exerting to rally the Muslims against Jinnah and the League, and to reorganize the Congress against Pakistan. In a statement<sup>1</sup> issued recently from Sirinagar, he admitted that a settlement of the problem could only be made by the willing co-operation of the Muslim League. He even recognised the right of self-determination of any area wishing to have such a measure; but in the same statement he declared that the division of India was wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of the Indian Muslims themselves. The statement, therefore, failed to improve upon the relations existing between the Congress and the League in any way. On the contrary, many prominent Muslim members of the Congress like Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, the Deputy Leader of the Congress in the Central Legislature, Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, the President of the Congress Committee in the Punjab, and others left the Congress and joined the League-banner almost immediately after the issue of this statement.

Once again we find the Maulana exerting to unite the 'two phenomena of opposite

<sup>1</sup> Text given in Appendix VI.

drifts'—Hindus and Muslims; one aiming at the *Akhand Hindustan*, while the other at *Pakistan*. Once again we find the Maulana seeking unity among two people who seem to be steering opposite courses, and who have never come together upon a point during the past thirteen hundred years. But let us hope for the dawn of a better day, for the success of the Maulana yet lies in the womb of time.

## CHAPTER XI

### Some Known and Unknown Aspects of Azad<sup>1</sup>

The day opened into a transcendent mood of light and colour, and a beautiful little bungalow in Ballyganj, Calcutta, was caught in a net of golden filaments. A spindly and frail youth sat beside a vanished name on the gate. The windows of a little room in the upper storey opened out and the sun slanted through the chinks of the blinds into the coolness of the room where, half-hidden behind the piles of files and pyramids of books, sat one of the most important individuals in India today,—a yellow-cheeked old gentleman nearing the sixty mark, with eyes calm and face grave, with a beard rather foreign looking and with

<sup>1</sup> This Chapter is based upon the following principal sources :—

1. K. A. Waheed, *Abul Kalam Apne Alfaz Ki Roshni Men*, ('*Kitab*' May, 1944).
2. M. Hafeezullah, *You Know About Maulana Azad . . . ?* (*Dawn*, Delhi, December 2, 1945).
3. A. Bazmi, *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (Paigham-i-Haq*, Vol. II, Nos. 1 and 3, July and September, 1945).
4. Maulana Abul Kalam's Statement dated August 20, 1945.
5. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's speech at Quetta dated October 16, 1945.
6. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's speech at Peshawar dated November 24, 1945.



two prominent furrows down his cheeks. He was Abul Kalam Azad.

Azad, who has headed the Congress on many occasions since 1923 and has lifted much of his country out of mud and squaller in a peaceful revolution that is of tremendous importance to the four hundred million Indians, is known to be the hardest working man in Congress. Up at the crack of dawn, he begins the day with his prayers, and then with a cup of tea resumes his work of reading and writing in the little room so strongly scented with the smell of old manuscripts and files.

## II

You find in the Maulana a victim of over-work and over-exertion, but one who wears a look of supreme internal contentment. He would welcome you with a smile and after a handshake with you the very spirit of him would be peeping through every crevice of his face. A few minutes' presence in his company would make you feel as if you know him since ages. You would feel at home with him, and all that he requires of you is to be a good listener, for he would do the talking part for most of the time. But his diction would neither be a dry speech that may bore you down nor a pulpitarian sermon which may cause you an inferiority complex. On the

other hand every word of his talk would go right down to your heart. His words are always so well-balanced, so appropriate and so touched with wit and humour that you feel fresh as ever even after spending hours in his company. He is quick to comprehend your feelings by the look of your face and attune his talk accordingly. He is, thus, not only a great writer and a great orator, but a great conversationalist to boot. He is gifted with such a powerful memory that he knows countless verses of the Persian, Urdu and Arabic poetry by heart. Besides, he remembers passages after passages of books that he happens to study once, and repeats them verbatim so fluently at the appropriate occasion that the listener simply wonders at the versatility of his talents. Similarly his mind is a veritable mine of witticism and repartee which he uses in an amazingly brilliant manner at times. In addition to all these qualities he possesses a wonderful capacity of deliberation with the calmness of heart and brain even at the most exciting moments, and grasps the situation so quickly that one really feels astonished at his intellectual capacity. These are some of the attributes which combine to make him prominent in every gathering and every society. And no doubt these were the natural gifts on account of which he could attain a unique status in the literary and political spheres of the country in his early twenties through his

writings in the *Al-Hilal* and *Al-Balagh*. The Maulana was the first person to be elected President of the Congress at a young age of 34, and it goes to his credit that despite his youth and inadequate knowledge of the English language he attained a prominent position amongst such silver-topped politicians and literary geniuses as Pandit Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Gandhi, Mohammad Ali, and Dr. Ansari. Again during the Khilafat Movement when almost all prominent *Ulama* including such devout and pious personages as the Shaikh-ul-Hind of Deo Band and Maulana Abdul Bari of Farangi Mahal were participating in the meetings, they could name only Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as their spokesman and President,—the man who could neither boast of his wealth nor of means at his disposal; who had neither any special group of society to back him up nor any circle of devotees to broadcast any diplomatic move. But still all eyes were cast upon him and all fingers were pointed towards him simply because the acuteness which nature had endowed upon him in the fields of literature and oration, and the spirit of recalcitration and revolution with which he was gifted knew no match in the country.

The Maulana is a clear-headed statesman, who knows well his job and the difficulties in his way; who knows life and men well and has

no illusion ; who has experienced happiness and sorrow and has had moments of exaltation ; who has occupied the fore-front of the stage and has made devoted and faithful friends, but who is not a politician of the type that are called 'clever' in the wider sense of the word. This *weakness* has always stood against him in the field of politics and impeded his reputation and celebrity in no small a degree. He can understand the situation well, but he cannot mould himself accordingly. He can fathom the mind of the public, but he cannot go beyond his convictions to satisfy them. He can keep his mind and heart at ease during tumult and strife, but he cannot use the heights of public emotion for his own good. He can laugh at his rivals, but he cannot do them any harm. The result is that he can bear all sorts of troubles, but he cannot take a revenge. He can pocket all sorts of abuses, but he cannot reimburse in the same coin. Thus, for the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem, which has become one of our great national headaches, he is willing to yield even more ground in order to avoid an open break with the League by declaring that 'the free Indian state can only be based on the willing co-operation of its federating units and of its principal communities, and cannot be founded on compulsion.' He further appeals his 'fellow Muslims to view the question in this perspective realizing that their future lies in their own

hands and there can be no compulsion on them', but he finds it impossible to have a heart to heart talk with Jinnah in the matter of Pakistan, for he believes that 'the division of India is wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of Indian Muslims themselves.'

### III

The Maulana gets sick by the vilipendency passing against him in the press; but he cannot condemn men of his own party for the similar behaviour against their opponents, nor can he take from their hands the weapons that are misused to defeat the enemy. The official organ of the Muslim League,—*Dawn* recently wrote in a leading article: "One of the compelling reasons which led to the Muslim demand for Pakistan and complete severance of Muslim India from Hindu India was the terrible suffering to which Muslim minorities in Hindu majority provinces were subjected during 1937-39 when, by a collusive understanding between the Viceroy and the Provincial Governors on the one hand and the Congress High Command on the other, almost absolute Hindu *raj* was established in those provinces."<sup>1</sup>

The Maulana is loath to approve of such

<sup>1</sup> *Dawn*, Delhi, November 1, 1945.

tactics of his party, and dislikes even such ways of action which Jinnah spoke of at Quetta the other day. "I do not believe in starting a movement for the sake of jail-going," said he. "We are accused of having made no sacrifices for our goal. I am afraid, we cannot contribute that sort of sacrifice to which the Congress seems accustomed. Thanks to obtain leadership, to sit like a goat under the police *lathi-charge*, then to go to jail, then to complain loss of weight, and then to manage release. I do not believe in that sort of struggle, but, when the time for suffering comes, I will be the first to get bullet shots in my chest."

Thus, one would ask that if the Maulana does not approve of the tactics of his fellow-workers then why does he not leave them to their fate and adopt such political creed as he thinks best? The answer is not far to seek. The Muslims are displeased with the Maulana's political outlook right from the moment when they began to lose interest in the Congress after the cooling down of the Khilafat Movement. But the greatest qualification of the Maulana is the stability and unchangeableness of his character, which the late Maulana Mohammad Ali styled as the 'stubbornness in Abul Kalam'. This trait in his character comes right from his childhood as I wrote in an earlier chapter, and as a proof thereof,

it can be said that throughout the course of his life we do not find a single incident which may show us his descension from any of his own decisions. He takes a step forward only after considerable deliberation, and once he does so, he would never think of retreat. This fact about the Maulana's character is admitted even by his greatest opponents that during the last thirty-three years he has had one and the same political aim before him. During the course of this long period innumerable storms appeared on the political firmament of India and most of his companions went astray, but he alone stood all these storms like a mountain—strong and impregnable. He invited the Muslims right in the beginning of his career to come upon the path of liberty by having trust in their own selves, and the same invitation he is extending today after a third of a century in such unfailing words: "I would remind my co-religionists that I am standing today on the same spot from where I had addressed them in 1912. During this period all that has happened in this country has been watched by me. Neither my eyes have failed to see nor my mind has ever neglected to think about these incidents. I have been actively observing each one of them by standing amidst their course. Therefore, I cannot misapprehend what I have seen myself. It is not possible for me to fight against my belief; I cannot suppress my inner voice. I have been telling

you people throughout this period, and I tell you the same even today that the ninety million Mussalmans of India can have only that way of action to which I had invited them in 1912."

Thus, the Maulana's speeches and writings clearly prove that he is working with a single end in view from the very beginning of his career, and this stability of his character and immutability of his faith is a characteristic which can hardly be met with in any other Muslim leader of our times.

#### IV

A Muslim scholar writes about the Maulana in a recent article:<sup>1</sup> "A number of doctors have offered to heal this sick man of India. Let us hear Maulana Azad first. He is a great scholar as well as a great man. If his political views differ, that is no ground for abusing him. We must listen to him dispassionately. He wants us to join the Congress and believe that Congress will safeguard the Muslim interests. We trust him for that, but he will have to concede that Congress is out and out a Hindu body pledged to *Purna Swaraj* and *Akhand Hindustan*. It is a pity that the Maulana Saheb, himself being such a big



scholar of Urdu literature, could not find one single word to replace the title of '*Rashtrapati*', which is so endeared to him. '*Rashtrapati*', '*Purna Swaraj*' '*Bande Mataram*', and '*Akhand Hindustan*' are terms which were chosen by the 'National Congress'. Is there anything national about them? I see everything Hindu about them. Ask the Congress to change one single term, '*Purna Swaraj*' into '*Hukoomat-i-Ilahiah*' and see how many Hindus support it! This shows that the Maulana Saheb wishes us to embrace a die-hard Hindu under the unoffending name of Congressman. We are prepared even to do this, but what are we to do when even in the ordinary routine life, we are hated, betrayed and wronged in every possible manner by the Hindus?

"Has the Maulana ever paid any attention to the unsparing destruction heaped upon the Muslims by the Hindu capitalists in the trade market? Has the Maulana ever looked into the Government offices, where the Muslims are crushed by every possible means by their Hindu superiors? When Sir J. P. Srivastava was asked in the Assembly why is it that there are no Muslim Officers in the Food Department, did the Maulana Saheb notice what he answered? He said, 'I know it, but the Government is not prepared to do anything about it at present.'

"Has the Maulana ever studied the average Hindu mentality? You go to a

Hindu shop-keeper and ask him for milk. If he comes to know that you are a Muslim, he will simply ask you to stay aside, and then from a height of half a yard, he will pour down milk into your vessel. Has the Maulana ever thought of it? We can make a sacrifice in one thing, two things, three things. But here we have no limit to sacrifices. The Hindu can never be satisfied unless and until we forsake our True Dear Lord, our Beloved Prophet and our Cherished Quran. And this shall never be. If the Maulana Saheb finds comfort in Hindu arms, let him. Islam is not a religion of custodians. (We can sacrifice, and very easily too, Maulana Saheb and their type.) We can ignore the differences in the political views of the Maulana, but we cannot forgive betrayal of the Muslim cause."

The greatest weakness with the Maulana is that he is extremely cool-minded and dispassionate. We call it a *weakness*, because it is due to this trait in his character that he falls short of rectifying such misunderstandings that his opponents create amongst the public. He bears greatest slanders of his enemies and ignores dispassionately their dirtiest lampoons; he quietly listens to their strongest allegations against him and laughs them away without taking any serious notice about them.

It is a fact that the Congress ministries formed in 1937 by people like Misra, Pant, Shukla, Tandon and Sampurnananda displayed

the arch Hindu-Mahasabhite mentality at its worst, and as a result of it even the liberal Muslims who had long been accustomed to see everything in the non-communal light, began to feel sick of the Congress. The Pirpur Committee Report, which narrated some of the sufferings of Muslim minorities in the Hindu-majority provinces during the Congress regime, might have been based upon somewhat exaggerated accounts of the Congress tyranny and oppression, but it is true that scores of incidents did happen in the United Provinces, Central Provinces, and Bihar which were extremely dangerous to the Muslim society and culture. Thus, by going to the core of the question with an unprejudiced mind we clearly find that the attitude of the 'power-drunk majority' towards their Muslim neighbours debunked the fraudulent claim of the Congress that their representatives were capable of giving others a square deal, and could be trusted to mete out justice and fairness to Muslims. There was much hue and cry against the Congress oppression in the country, but in spite of the fact that the Maulana was at the head of the Congress, not a word from his lip, nor a line from his pen appeared before the public against these Hindu misdeeds. This was a matter of much confusion for the Muslim masses because they knew the Maulana to be neither denuded of mental capacity nor destitute of courage that he would avoid

to proclaim the truth because of any fear of the Hindus. It is beyond doubt that he was as much oppressed with the domination of the extremist element amongst the Hindus over the Congress machinery as any other conservative Muslim; he was as much staunch in views about the preservation of the racial and cultural discrimination of the Muslims as any other Muslim Leaguer; he was as much in support of safeguarding the Muslim rights against the bigoted onslaughts of the Hindu majority in the Independent India as any other lover of the freedom of human rights, but with all these noble sentiments he earnestly believed that 'our primary aim should be to clear the country of the British. Therefore, so long as our goal of complete independence is not achieved, we must continue our struggle in co-operation with the Hindus. . . . The Mussalmans must, therefore, enter the Congress in larger numbers and while trying for its amelioration should not overlook their own organization as well.' As regards the Muslim League, the Maulana declared emphatically that he considered the basic principles of the League and the method of organization and rapprochement of the Mussalmans to be quite essential<sup>1</sup> for harmonizing sentiments of the day; but with all that he also felt sorry that the organization which was being formed at the moment in the name of the Muslim League

<sup>1</sup> A. Bazmi, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

was practically representing a group of die-hard Mussalmans alone. Still the Maulana *agreed upon working in the field of politics by joining hands with the League*, and even stressed upon the point that the Mussalmans should either bring the League under the influence of the progressive element or they should form some other organization of their own.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the reactionary attitude of the Congress Hindus, the Maulana admits that although the Congress does contain the existence of such nauseating mentality within its folds, yet there are so many Hindus within it as well who are free from such bigotry.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, a lot of communal rancours could be easily purged from our midst if we could only strengthen the hands of such unbiased people. But he feels sorry that the present attitude of the Muslims themselves is such that it has gradually pushed even people like Jawaharlal Nehru towards the folds of Savarkars and Moonjes.

"I have not faltered an inch from my ideal," says the Maulana. "But we (Muslims) had decided at the time of the Khilafat Movement that the fundamental need for the betterment of the Muslim ends was to purge Hindustan of the existence of the British, and for this object we must co-operate with the

<sup>1</sup> A. Bazmi, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Hindus." He declares further: "I find this decision as true even today as I considered it in the year 1921, and therefore, for the achievement of this end I deem it essential to co-operate with the Congress."

## APPENDIX I

### *The Lahore Resolution of the All-India Muslim-League, dated the 26th March, 1940*

“Resolved that it is the considered view of this session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, *viz*, that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute ‘Independent States’ in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. Adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the constitution for minorities in the units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them and in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate,

effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other minorities, for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them. The session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of Constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.”



## APPENDIX II

### *The Cripps Offer, (30th March, 1942)*

“His Majesty’s Government having considered the anxieties expressed in Great Britain and in India as to the fulfilment of promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose, shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom and other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic and external affairs.

“His Majesty’s Government, therefore, make the following declaration :—

- “(a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities steps shall be taken to set up in India in manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.

“(b) Provision shall be made as set out below, for participation of Indian States in the Constitution-making body.

“(c) His Majesty’s Government undertake to accept and implement forthwith the Constitution so framed subject only to :

“ I. The right of any province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution, to retain its present Constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires.

“ With such non-acceding provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty’s Government will be prepared to agree upon a new Constitution giving them the same full status as the Indian Union and arrived at by a procedure analogous to that here laid down.

“ II. The signing of a treaty which shall be negotiated between His Majesty’s Government and the Constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands, it will make provision, in accordance, with undertakings given by His Majesty’s Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities, but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in future its relation-

ship to other member States of the British Commonwealth.

“ Whether or not an Indian State elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements so far as this may be required in the new situation.

“ (d) The Constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities :—

“ Immediately upon the result being known of provincial elections which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower House of Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about 1/10th of the number of the electoral college.

“ Indian States shall be invited to appoint representatives in the same proportion as to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole and with the same powers as British Indian members.

“ (e) During the critical period which now faces India and until the new Consti-

tution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for, and retain the control and direction of, the Defence of India as part of their world war effort; but the task of organizing to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the co-operation of the peoples of India.

“His Majesty's Government desire, and invite, the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vast and essential for the future freedom of India.”

### APPENDIX III

#### *The C. R. Formula, (10th July, 1944)*

“Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve :

- (1) “ Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for Independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.
- (2) “ After the termination of the war, a Commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the Muslim population is in absolute majority. In the areas thus demarcated, a plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of

adult suffrage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign State separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.

- (3) "It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.
- (4) "In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, and commerce and communications and for other essential purposes.
- (5) "Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.
- (6) "These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India."

#### APPENDIX IV

#### *The Sapru Committee Proposals, (8th April, 1945)*

The following is the summary of recommendations: —

#### *The Constitution-Making Body :*

The constitution-making body shall be constituted in the manner prescribed in Clause (d) of the draft resolution of His Majesty's Government brought by Sir Stafford Cripps, subject to the following modifications:—

1. The total strength of the body shall be 160, distributed as follows:—

Special interest, viz., commerce and industry, landholders, universities, labour and women 16; Hindus, excluding scheduled castes 51; Muslims 51; Scheduled castes 20; Indian Christians 7; Sikhs 8; Backward areas and tribes 3; Anglo-Indians 2; Europeans 1; Others 1.

2. It is because Clause (d) of H.M.G.'s declaration provides for election by a joint

electorate, composed of members of all the Provincial Legislatures under the system of proportional representation that the Committee has decided to recommend that, in spite of disparity in the population strengths between Muslims and Hindus other than scheduled castes, the Hindu community should, in the interests of promoting communal unity, agree that the representation of the Muslim community on the constitution-making body shall be on a *par* with that given to Hindus other than scheduled castes.

3. No decision shall be valid unless it is supported by 3/4ths of the members present and voting.

4. His Majesty's Government shall enact the constitution on the basis of the valid decisions of the constitution-making body supplemented wherever necessary by its own awards on matters in which the requisite majority for decision was not forthcoming.

### *Division of India*

The Committee having considered carefully the resolution of the Muslim League passed at Lahore in 1940, the various other resolutions of the League and the published version of the talks between Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Gandhi and having also considered the C. R. and Gandhi proposals, is emphatically of opinion that any division of India into two or more



separate independent sovereign states is unjustified and will endanger the peace and orderly progress of the whole country without any compensating advantage to any community, and that the political unity of India should, therefore, be maintained.

### *Indian States*

Provision should be made in the constitution for the accession from time to time of Indian States<sup>a</sup> as units of the Union on such terms as may be agreed upon. The Union should be brought into being and should commence to function at the earliest possible date, even if no Indian State has acceded to it as a unit by then.

### *Non-Accession and Secession*

No Province of British India may elect not to accede to the Union, nor may any unit—whether a Province or a State which has acceded—be entitled to secede therefrom.

### *Provincial Boundaries*

While it is not desirable that the new constitution should be delayed by the realignment of provincial boundaries on linguistic or cultural considerations, the Constitution act shall indicate the machinery and prescribe the procedure for such realignment of old provinces

and for the creation of new provinces after it has come into force, and on such realignment or creation of provinces, all consequential amendments may be made in the constitution.

### *Head of the State*

The Committee submits the accompanying suggestions for the consideration of the constitution-making body. They have been placed before the Committee by one of its members, who has great experience of the administration of Indian States and of the working of the Government of India Act 1935 in relation to them. As the Indian States are not represented on this Committee and as the suggestions are of a very vital and far-reaching character, the Committee has thought it desirable to express no opinion on the merits of the several alternatives suggested, beyond stating that a clear definition of "a head of the state" is necessary, as the several resolutions adopted by the Committee assume the existence of a head of the state and the exercise by him of certain powers and functions. The member responsible for these suggestions agrees that they or any variant of them involving the participation of the Indian States cannot be finally adopted except with the consent of the Indian States.

(1) There shall be a Head of the State (*i.e.*, Union) in India, who shall be repository

of (a) all such powers and duties as may be conferred or imposed on him by or under the Constitution Act, and (b) such other powers as are now vested in His Majesty the King of England, including powers connected with the exercise of the functions of Crown in its relations with Indian States, provided that, in relation to his powers, the Head of the State shall conform to the traditions, usages and conventions, which are binding on the constitutional Head of any State.

(2) The office of Head of the State shall have a tenure of five years, and ordinarily no person may hold the office for more than one term.

### *First Alternative*

The Head of the State shall be elected by an electoral college, composed of the members of the two houses, the Union legislature, either without any restriction as to their choice or subject to their choice being confined to the rulers of Indian States, having a minimum population or revenue or both, to be named in a schedule to the Constitution Act.

### *Second Alternative*

(3) The Head of the State shall be elected by the Rulers of the Indian States referred to above from amongst themselves.

*Third Alternative*

The Head of the State shall be appointed by His Majesty the King of England, on the advice of the Union cabinet, either without any restriction as to his choice or subject to his choice being confined to the Rulers of the Indian States referred to above.

(4) In case the third alternative in para. 3 is adopted and a link with the British Crown is maintained, the Secretary of State for India, together with all the control that he or the British Cabinet exercises over Indian administration should, in any case, be abolished.

(5) The head of a unit, other than an Indian State shall be appointed by the Head of the State on the advice of the Union cabinet.

*Defence*

The Committee strongly recommends that under the new constitution there should be a portfolio of defence which should be held by a minister responsible to the legislature, and that the actual control and discipline of the army should be placed in the hands of a Commander-in-Chief under the new Government.

The Committee further recommends that a national army should be created and

developed as rapidly as possible. It is unable to suggest at this stage what the strength of this army should be as this will depend, apart from the vital question of finance on a number of other factors, such as the nature of the post-war world settlement and the efficacy of the international organization for the maintenance of world peace. Among the measures which should be adopted for the creation of such an army the Committee recommends the following:—

Such British units as temporarily may be required for the efficient defence of India and such officers as may be needed for officering the National army until an adequate number of Indian officers becomes available shall be obtained by a treaty or agreement entered into by the Union Government and His Majesty's Government, specifying, among other things, the terms and conditions of their re-employment by the Union.

As soon as the war is over, all direct recruitment of British officers to the Indian forces should cease. Such British officers as do not belong to the Indian Army and are not required for specific appointments should be reverted to the British Army establishment.

The Committee would emphasize that the maintenance of law and order is essentially the responsibility of the Unit Governments and

that they should, if necessary, by increasing the strength of their police forces, equip themselves adequately for the discharge of this responsibility. The Committee would, however, make it clear that the services of troops on the Union Army establishment should be available for being requisitioned only when the civil power finds itself unable to cope with any particular situation.

## APPENDIX V

### *The Wavell Plan, (14th June, 1945)*

“ I have been authorized by His Majesty's Government to place before Indian political leaders proposals designed to ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of full self-government.

“ These proposals are at the present moment being explained to Parliament by the Secretary of State for India. My intention, in this broadcast, is to explain to you the proposals, the ideas underlying them, and the method by which I hope to put them into effect.

“ This is not an attempt to obtain or impose a constitutional settlement. His Majesty's Government had hoped that the leaders of the Indian parties would agree amongst themselves on a settlement of the communal issue, which is the main stumbling-block, but this hope has not been fulfilled.

“ In the meantime, India has great opportunities to be taken and great problems to be solved, which require a common effort by leading men of all parties. I, therefore,

propose, with the full support of His Majesty's Government, to invite Indian leaders both of central and provincial politics to take counsel with me with a view to forming a new Executive Council more representative of organised political opinion.

*Hindu-Muslim Parity.*

“The proposed new Council would represent the main communities and would include equal proportions of caste Hindus and Muslims. It would work, if formed, under the existing constitution. But it would be an entirely Indian Council, except for the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, who would retain his position as War Member.

“It is also proposed that the portfolio of External Affairs, which has hitherto been held by the Viceroy, should be placed in charge of an Indian, so far as the interests of British India are concerned.

“A further step proposed by His Majesty's Government is the appointment of a British High Commissioner in India, as in the Dominions, to represent Great Britain's commercial and other such interests in India.

“Such a new Executive Council will, you realize, represent a definite advance on the road to self-government. It will be almost entirely Indian, and the Finance and Home



Members will, for the first time, be Indians, while an Indian will also be charged with the management of India's foreign affairs. Moreover, members will now be selected by the Governor-General, after consultation with political leaders, though their appointment will, of course, be subject to the approval of His Majesty the King-Emperor.

“The Council will work within the framework of the present constitution; but there can be no question of the Governor-General agreeing not to exercise his constitutional power of control, though it will, of course, not be exercised unreasonably.

“I should make it clear that the formation of this interim Government will, in no way prejudice the final constitutional settlement.

### *The Task of the New Government*

“The main tasks for this new Executive Council would be:

“(1) To prosecute the war against Japan with the utmost energy till Japan is utterly defeated.

“(2) To carry on the Government of British India with all the manifold tasks of post-war development in front of it, until a new permanent constitution can be agreed upon and comes into force.

“(3) To consider when members of Government think it possible, the means by which such agreement can be achieved. The third task is most important. I want to make it quite clear that neither I nor His Majesty's Government have lost sight of the need for a long-term solution, and that the present proposals are intended to make a long-term solution easier.

### *Invitation to Leaders*

“I have considered the best means of forming such a Council, and have decided to invite the following to Viceregal Lodge to advise me:

“(1) Those now holding office as Premiers in provincial governments, or, for provinces now under Section 93 of Government, those who last held office of Premiers.

“(2) The Leader of the Congress Party and the Deputy Leader of the Muslim League Party in the Central Assembly; the Leader of the Congress Party and the Muslim League Party in the Council of State; as also the Leaders of the Nationalist Party and the European Group in the Assembly.

“(3) Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah as recognized leaders of the two main political parties.

“(4) Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj to represent the Scheduled Classes and Master Tara Singh to represent the Sikhs.

“Invitations to these gentlemen are being handed today, and it is proposed to assemble the Conference on June 25 at Simla, where we shall be cooler than at Delhi.

“I trust that all those invited will attend the Conference and give me their help. On me and on them will lie a heavy responsibility in this fresh attempt to make progress towards a final settlement of India's future.

### *Coalition Ministries*

“If this meeting is successful, I hope we shall be able to agree on the formation of the new Executive Council at the Centre. I also hope that it will be possible for ministries to re-assume office and again undertake the tasks of government in the provinces now administered under Section 93 of the Constitution Act and that these ministries will be coalitions.

“If the meeting should unfortunately fail, we must carry on as at present until the parties are ready to come together. The existing Executive Council, which has done such valuable work for India, will continue it if arrangements cannot be agreed.

“But I have every hope that the meeting will succeed if the party leaders will approach the problem with the sincere intention of working with me and with each other. I can

assure them that there is behind this proposal a most genuine desire on the part of all responsible leaders in the United Kingdom and of the British people as a whole to help India towards her goal. I believe that this is more than a step towards that goal ; it is a considerable stride forward, and a stride on the right path.

“ I should make it clear that these proposals affect British India only and do not make any alteration in the relations of the Princes with the Crown Representative.

### *The Release of Congress Leaders*

“ With the approval of His Majesty's Government, and after consultation with my Council, orders have been given for the immediate release of members of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress who are still in detention. I propose to leave the final decision about the others still under detention as the result of the 1942 disturbances, to the new Central Government, if formed, and to the Provincial Governments.

“ The appropriate time for fresh elections for the Central and provincial Legislatures will be discussed at the Conference.

“ Finally, I would ask you all to help in creating the atmosphere of goodwill and mutual confidence that is essential if we are to make progress. The destiny of this great country

and of the many millions who live in it depend on the wisdom and good understanding of the leaders, both of action and of thought, British and Indian, at this critical moment of India's history.

“India's military reputation never stood higher in the world than it does at present; thanks to the exploits of her sons drawn from all parts of the country. Her representatives at international conferences have won high regard for their statesmanlike attitude. Sympathy for India's aspirations and progress towards prosperity was never greater or more widespread. We have thus great assets if we can use them wisely. But it will not be easy, it will not be quick. There is very much to do, there are many pitfalls and dangers. There is on all sides something to forgive and forget.

“I believe in the future of India, and as far as in me lies will further her greatness. I ask you all for your co-operation and goodwill.”

## APPENDIX VI

### *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's Statement, dated the 20th August 1945, regarding the Need for Final Solution of Indian Freedom*

“ The war which has just ended led to the postponement of many urgent problems. In some cases this was inevitable. In many others, the war was made an excuse for such postponement. The final end of the war has suddenly brought all these problems to the forefront and war conditions can no longer be pleaded as an excuse. Both from the national and international points of view the question of India's freedom, political and economic, is now an urgent and vital issue on which depends not only the well-being of 400,000,000 but also to a large extent the future peace of the world.

“ This question, always vital and important, has now been precipitated to the very forefront and there can be no further delay in its solution. The solution has now to be a final and permanent one. Such a settlement can only mean the establishment of a democratic government for a free and independent India

co-operating in the international domain with the other free governments of the world. As a part of this settlement, and for the brief period between now and the assumption of office by the Government of free India under a constitution framed by the constituent assembly, interim governments both in the Centre and the Provinces will be necessary in order to deal with the acute distress prevailing in the country and with post-war problems, as well as to arrange the preliminary processes of the constituent assembly. But such interim arrangements can only be possible as a part of the final settlement.

### *Communal Problem*

“It has been stated on behalf of the British Government that a constituent assembly should be summoned at the conclusion of hostilities. Hostilities have now ceased. The only excuse that may be advanced for a possible delay in convening the constituent assembly is the lack of a solution of the communal problem. This should offer no difficulty as the Indian National Congress has gone a long way to find a solution.

“In regard to the Hindu-Muslim problem, as it has taken shape today with the demand on the part of the Muslim-League for a partition of the country, the Congress has given the most earnest consideration to it, desiring

as it does, the well-being and freedom of the country as a whole and of each group or community in it. It has even recognized the right of self-determination of any area provided that this is the established and declared will of the inhabitants of that area, but subject to the exercise of such right not resulting in the compulsion of any other group.

“ The Congress is convinced that the free Indian State can only be based on the willing co-operation of its federating units and of its principal communities, and cannot be founded on compulsion. Further, the Congress has declared that the federating units should have the largest conceivable amount of freedom to function as they will, subject only to certain essential bonds for their common welfare. Even independent countries adjoining each other have to develop these common bonds and links and can no longer live in isolation.

“ Thus, the Congress has gone to the farther limit in recognizing the right of self-determination even to the extent of separation under certain circumstances and with certain safeguards for the communities affected and for the country as a whole. It has done so in the earnest hope that when the problems are viewed in proper perspective and without passion and prejudice, the facts of the situation will induce all concerned to co-operate together in building up a free and democratic Indian



State, with every freedom to the constituent units to develop according to their needs and wishes. But if any such unit or group of adjoining unit decides otherwise, it can take charge of its own destiny. It will be open to the representatives of such a unit in the constituent assembly to advance its claims and a decision on this should not rest on the majority vote of the assembly but on the vote of the representatives in the assembly of the areas concerned.

“While the Congress position is clear, doubts and suspicions have not wholly disappeared and I feel that in order to remove these, some clarification is needed. I propose, therefore, to place this matter before the next meeting of the Working Committee and I am confident that the desired clarification will be forthcoming.

“So far as I am concerned, after long and careful deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that the division of India is wholly impracticable and opposed to the ultimate interests of Indian Muslims themselves.

“But I realize also that the present political atmosphere of the country is surcharged with suspicion and doubt and a large section among Indian Muslims does not seem to be in a mood to view realities in their proper perspective. This section can be expected to

do so only when it is assured that the determination of their destinies rests with Muslims themselves without external compulsion. When this is realized, suspicion and doubt will largely disappear and efforts to reach a desirable and mutually satisfactory solution of the communal problem will be fruitful.

### *Fear Complex*

In the great tasks before us, all of us must get rid of the fear complex. I appeal to my fellow Muslims to view the question in this perspective realizing that their future lies in their own hands and there can be no compulsion on them. I appeal also to my Hindu and Sikh and other fellow-citizens to appreciate this approach to a problem which has troubled us so much and has been a bar to our progress.

“With this approach on the part of Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs, I have no doubt that the atmosphere of distrust will undergo a change and give place to a climate of mutual trust. Even the section of Muslims I have in view, can then be trusted to begin to examine the question of separation dispassionately.

“It should be borne in mind that if the right of self-determination is conceded to any area in such circumstances as prevail in our



